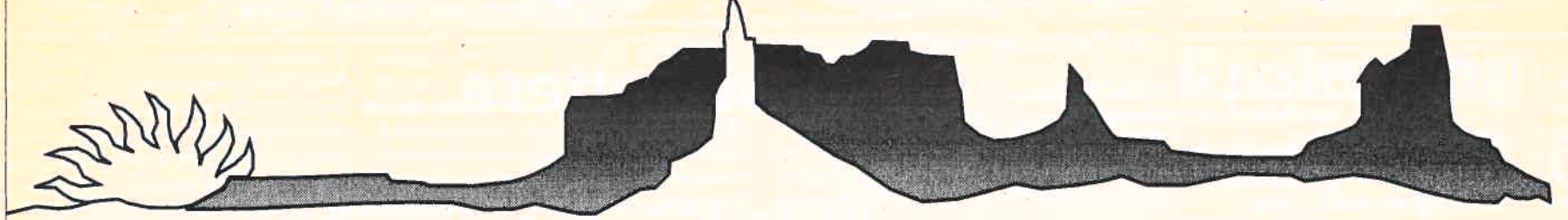


Rio Grande Sierran



News of the Rio Grande Chapter Sierra Club
March/April 1997

Legislative Update

ROUNDHOUSE REPORT



by Deborah Hibbard, Chapter Lobbyist

The New Mexico Legislature is underway and we are already hard at work challenging efforts to weaken the Subdivision Act and the Solid Waste Act. A "Takings" bill has again been introduced (Private Property Protection Act--S654 [Vernon]) which will have to be defeated. And, we're just short of halfway through the session!

We have negotiated with the New Mexico Mining Association a package of four amendments to the Mining Act that were mutually agreeable, meeting some of their concerns and some of our concerns, and that do not weaken the Act.

We also have encountered a voluntary remediation, otherwise known as "brownfields," bill (Voluntary Remediation Act--S362 [Maes]), which provides incentives for voluntary cleanup of small contaminated sites that aren't covered by other clean-up programs. We were able, with assistance from the Club's San Francisco office, to present

amendments to the bill which provide needed assurances for both environmental safeguards and citizen participation.

In addition, we have been involved in ongoing discussions with individuals and interests advocating utility deregulation. It is our position that such a bill needs to provide, first and foremost, benefits for residential customers and environmental improvement.

There are a variety of bills to promote environmental issues that we are actively supporting, which include: Amphibians & Reptiles Protection (HB30 [Porter]), which to date has passed the House;

Regional Transit Authority Act (HB669 [Silva]), which has the strong support of the Albuquerque group; Animal Cruelty Penalty (HB 500 [McSherry]); Growth & Impact Issues Study (S793 [Nava]); and two memorials to Preserve River Ecosystems (HJM35 [Trujillo]; SJM18 [Feldman]). There are also a number of bills to protect the dark skies of New Mexico through the regulation of outdoor lighting.

There is a wide range of bills concerning water, from water planning to monitoring diversion to strengthening the State Engineer's enforcement powers. There are also a few bills relating to the development

of land use and master plans by both counties and municipalities.

The challenges are numerous and the days are long in the effort to protect, as well as further,

(con't on page 20)

Domenici Wants Roads Through Petroglyphs

by Ike Eastvold, Campaign Team Leader

"I'm going to get an easement for the City," Senator Pete Domenici frankly told me about his plans to introduce legislation authorizing the six-lane freeway-type road, Paseo del Norte, through Petroglyph National Monument. "It's only ten acres or so out of seven thousand in the Monument," he added by way of justification. "And you know the Indians wouldn't have had anything if we hadn't made that Monument," he asserted when I reminded him of the Pueblo Indians' objections to road building through their sacred area.

I sat in Domenici's office on the last day of January. Just the week before, he had arranged a meeting of all the delegation (except Bill Richardson), the Mayors of Rio Rancho and Albuquerque, and Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt to discuss his plans to legislate the road. Reportedly, Babbitt was firm at first in asserting that he would recommend an administration veto for such unprecedented legislation but, by the end of the meeting did agree to study the whole matter again and report back to the delegation in two weeks. As the *Sierran* goes to press, discussions between Babbitt and the two Senators continue, and no conclusions are publicly in sight.

Bingaman Interested in Alternatives

"I'm waiting to hear back from Secretary Babbitt," Senator Bingaman said after he told me about this meeting. With Republicans Steve Schiff and Joe Skeen falling in line with Domenici's initiative, and Bill Richardson lost to the UN, Bingaman was left uncomfortably on the hot seat. I found him genuinely interested in exploring alternatives to avoid a through-Monument road. We discussed a changing climate of opinion in Albuquerque on land use and transportation, with public opinion stiffening against sprawl, and even the City Public Works Department advocating an urban services boundary which would preclude for at least 25

years extending infrastructure to the area penetrated by Paseo del Norte. And a majority of the City Council has recently recommended in the West Side Strategic Plan that the far west end of Paseo not receive services for 80 years. "So where is the real need for Paseo?" I asked Bingaman.

Domenici--Old School

Domenici, on the other hand, resisted the suggestion of any new studies. "It's been studied to death," he said to me, and added that there was lots of opposition to the Public Works proposal for an urban services boundary. "Landowners would lose money,"

(con't on page 4)

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The *Rio Grande Sierran* is published by the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club as a benefit for Sierra Club members living in New Mexico and West Texas. (Make address changes by calling Membership Services at (415) 977-5649.)

Non-member subscriptions at \$10 per year are available from the Treasurer, Blair Brown. Send checks to 2226B Wyoming NE #272, Albuquerque, NM 87112. Please allow 8 weeks for processing.

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Contributions are welcomed from members and non-members. Send to **Rio Grande Sierran, B. Johnson, 1 Encantado Loop, Santa Fe, NM 87505** or by E-mail to barbara.johnson@sierraclub.org. Articles should be submitted by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Preferred format is via modem or on Macintosh disc as Microsoft Word file. Other formats may be compatible--check with the Production Manager. Letters and articles are subject to abridgement.

Printed on 100% post-consumer waste newsprint by PrintWorld in El Paso.

We Get Letters...

Uneasy

Dear Editor:

In his column "The Uneasy Chair" in the January/February *Rio Grande Sierran*, Courtney White criticizes a Sierra Club chapter in an unnamed other state that called for people-free wildlife refuges. It is difficult to respond to someone who rejects reason and observation in favor of emotion and opinion ("Science balanced emotion and for a while there was harmony. Today the pendulum has swung too far toward science."), but nevertheless I will try.

White describes a call for people-free wildlife refuges as misanthropic, driving a wedge between people and wildlife, categorically rejecting any association between people and wildlife, banishing humans, belittling legitimate human use of the wilderness, demonizing humans, characterizing humans as an ecological Lucifer, punishing humans, locking up the landscape, and politically suicidal.

Oh my!

I don't see anything outrageous in a call for people-free wildlife refuges. Parts of the Bosque del Apache refuge are closed to the public, and in most of the open areas visitors are asked to stay in their vehicles. The birds, most of which belong to non-endangered species, are alarmed at the sight of a person on foot, so they fly up. Instead of feeding and storing energy, they fly and lose energy. When spring comes, disturbed birds may not have enough fat stores for the journey to the breeding grounds, and if they get there they may not be in good enough condition for reproduction. Yes, humans do have a deleterious effect on wildlife. Yet White, I take it, opposes current refuge management because it places the "rights" of the waterfowl ahead of human need for recreation. In his view, only "critically endangered" species deserve protection. I cannot agree with him.

White says, "The number of humans who actually go into designated wilderness areas is small." At the risk of appearing scientific, I would like to point out that the number may be small compared with the urban population, but it is large compared with the carrying capacity of the wilderness. Parts of the Gila and Aldo Leopold Wildernesses are overused, with gullied trails, worn-out campsites, and well-established European weedy plants. White may not remember the time when a backpacker could safely assume that a mountain stream was free of human feces, but I can assure him it was only a few decades ago. Humans definitely visit wilderness in high enough numbers to affect the ecosystem.

White asks, "What is pure habitat anyway?"--implying that the term cannot be defined. Here is a definition most ecologists accept: a pure (or pristine, or natural, or undisturbed) habitat is a habitat that existed in North or South America before 1492. The fact that the pre-Conquest population interacted with the ecosystem does not lessen the utility of this definition. Ecologists in the Old World need a more complex definition, but formulating a useful definition is not impossible.

White says that a call for people-free wildlife refuges defines people as "unnatural." He says, "But we must also acknowledge the naturalness of human beings." It is true that human bodies obey the laws of chemistry and physics. It is true that we evolved from other animals by a natural process. But nonetheless, there is a difference between things that happen of themselves and things that happen because of human action. A meadow differs from an asphalt parking lot, a cottonwood bosque differs from a tamarisk thicket, and a wolf running in the hills differs from a dog trotting at our heels. It is convenient to have a linguistic distinction to mark the real differences. If horses could talk, their language would distinguish between events caused by horses and events not caused by horses. But we are human, so we speak of natural on the one hand and unnatural, artificial, man-made, degraded, or anthropogenically disturbed on the other. Abolishing the linguistic distinction, as White proposes, would not enhance our discussions.

White dislikes humans being blamed

for ecological ills, but there are only three major non-human causes of ecological problems: variations in the earth's orbit around the sun, continental drift, and asteroid impact. The first two processes operate on a scale of thousands to millions of years, and the most recent big asteroid hit was 65 million years ago. Our current ecological ills, which arose over a few decades to a few centuries, have well-documented human causes.

Although a balance between the needs of the ecosystem and the needs of people sounds like a noble goal, it is a will-o-the-wisp, constantly moving towards the needs of the people. The U.S. population is growing by 1% per year. Moreover, we have locked ourselves into an economy that must grow two or three times as fast as the population if it is to avoid intolerable unemployment. An economy growing at 2% per year doubles every 35 years; one growing at 3% per year doubles every 23 years. Because the economy feeds on natural resources, there is a constant outcry for more highways, more clearcutting, more mines, more ski lifts, more housing developments, and larger garbage dumps. It is not possible to compromise if, no matter how much you give up, your bargaining partner always asks for more. Slow retreat is the best you can expect.

Humans are both the perpetrators and the victims of ecological abuse. The major conflict of our time is not, as White would have it, between humans and wildlife, but between humans now and humans later. We do not know how simple an ecosystem can support humans, but we are rushing headlong to find out. We are running a global experiment in ecological simplification with one replication and no controls. (I hope White will forgive the scientific terminology.) We are throwing away species at a rate of 100 per day. Maybe we can live without Silvery Minnows in the Rio Grande, wolves in the Gila Wilderness, or snow geese at the Bosque del Apache, but we do need more than our crop plants and domestic animals. Just how much more no one knows. It would be a pity to find out by going below our minimal need for ecological complexity. Maybe White trusts our managers to find a balance between the needs of the people and the needs of wildlife at the last possible moment before ecological collapse, but I don't. We must stop the devastation now. We must stop eating our seed corn.

How's that for emotion? Those who are not adverse to science may wish to consult David Quammen's *The Song of the Dodo* (1995) and some of the many technical papers in refereed professional journals cited therein to verify my statements.

Certainly compromise and bargaining are necessary in political action. Political goals cannot be achieved without consideration of economic factors. We should be courteous rather than confrontational. But we should not be so eager to agree that we bargain away everything we are trying to protect.

Sincerely,

Alice Anderson

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Las Cruces, NM 88003

Courtney responds:

The environmental movement, I propose, is fighting with one hand tied behind its back. The fist that is out is ecology, swinging purposefully and properly, though a bit wildly at times. The fist that is tied is humanism, for the lack of a better word. It speaks to philosophical and practical human needs, such as beauty, open space, and healthy wildlife populations.

Our movement should be fighting with both fists--not one or the other. Both hands are connected to the same body, after all, and work for the same overall mission: to create and maintain a healthy world. Human health and natural system health are intimately interconnected and any division between the two is not only arbitrary, it is downright dangerous.

This is a philosophical issue. Does a ban on people in wildlife refuges include professional

(con't on page 18)

In my effort to comprehend recent events, and to explore my belief that our movement is out-of-balance, I have sought advice in recent months from books by authors that I respect. It is important, I believe, to seek wise counsel from those who have gone before, who have thought and fought over the same issues in the past, and who might have something to teach us today. Unfortunately, more and more of us are plowing ahead in ignorance of the history, philosophy, and literature of our movement. And it makes me very uneasy.

Two authors in particular, one living and one living in spirit, provide a provocative, and corroborative, commentary on our movement's imbalance. Both speak to the "human element" in conservation in a thoughtful and eloquent manner that needs to be shared here.

Wallace Stegner

Novelist, essayist, short story writer, and all-around gentleman, Stegner became an eloquent, and effective, champion of conservation causes, especially in the defense of public lands (he served on the Sierra Club's Board of Directors for a time). Together with his good friend Ansel Adams, with whose aesthetic he was closely allied, Stegner had a significant impact on critical fights—stopping the dams in Dinosaur National Monument wilderness areas, and decrying the exploitation of the American West and its natural resources. His death in 1993 created a void that has not been filled.

Stegner's perspective on conservation was almost entirely humanistic. In his famous "Wilderness Letter" of 1960, he wrote: "We need wilderness preserved because the reassurance that it is still there is good for our spiritual health even if we never once in ten years set foot in it. It is good for us when we are young, because of the incomparable sanity it can briefly bring, as vacation and rest, into our insane lives. It is important to us when we are old simply because it is there—important, that is, simply as idea."

In his essay on why we should save Dinosaur National Monument from the clutches of dambuilders comes this provocative statement: "It would be idiotic to preach conservation of a wilderness in perpetuity, just to keep it safe from all human use. It is only for human use that it has any meaning, or is worth preserving."

He elaborates: "A place is nothing in itself. It has no meaning, it can hardly be said to exist, except in terms of human perception, use, and response. The wealth and resources and usefulness of any region are only inert potential until man's hands and brain have gone to work; and natural beauty is nothing until it comes to the eye of the beholder. The natural world, actually, is the test by which each man proves himself: I see, I feel, I love, I use, I alter, I appropriate, therefore I

am. Or the natural world is a screen onto which we project our own images; without our images there, it is as blank as the cold screen of an empty movie house. We cannot even describe a place except in terms of its human uses."

Whether you agree or not with those sentiments, they strike an important chord in us. They tell us that powerful arguments can be made for the preservation of wild land for humanistic reasons—arguments, I submit, that resonate strongly with the public today. Or, as Stegner puts it: "We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope." We need that hope now, more than ever.

Wendell Berry

Novelist, poet, essayist, and farmer in rural Kentucky (as well as a former pupil of Stegner's), Berry has emerged as the leading voice of a new conservation ethic, one based, essentially, on getting one's hands dirty in the soil. A passionate critic of corporate capitalism as it applies to the earth, Berry champions the conservation of rural communities as a way to simultaneously preserve the ecological integrity of the land and heal our wounded society.

Like Stegner, he too is a humanistic conservationist. In a collection of essays entitled *What Are* environmental problems are not, at root, political; they are cultural. As Edward Abbey knows and has been telling us, our country is not being destroyed by bad politics; it is being destroyed by a bad way of life." And: "I believe that until fairly recently our destructions of nature were more or less unwitting—the by-products, so to speak, of our ignorance or weakness or depravity. It is our present principled and elaborately rationalized rape and plunder of the natural world that is a new thing under the sun."

The answer is not more science, but more affection. "The sciences are of no help, indeed are destructive, because they work, by principle, outside the demands, checks, and corrections of affection." Humans, insists Berry, need to return their attitude to the land, to develop a love for nature that also includes respect for it. Aldo Leopold had much the same in mind when he wrote his famous "land ethic" essay all those years ago.

In his most recent collection of essays, entitled *Another Turn of the Crank*, Berry aggressively, and eloquently, links human health to the health of the land. He writes: "People are seeing more clearly all the time the connections between conservation and economics. They are seeing that a community's health is largely determined by the way it makes a living."

He continues: "The natural membership of the community party consists of small farmers, ranchers, and market gardeners, worried consumers, owners, and employees of small shops, stores, community

banks, and other small businesses, self-employed people, religious people, and conservationists. The aims of this party really are only two: the preservation of ecological diversity and integrity, and the renewal, on sound cultural and ecological principles, of local economies and local communities."

Two Goals

Berry, like Stegner, sees the conservation movement as a two-pronged effort: to protect the ecology of wild land and to preserve the best aspects of human cultures. Both writers view these goals as inseparably entwined. The ruination of the environment shares a root cause with the destruction of culture. The same remedy must be applied to both symptoms. To fight strictly for biodiversity and the rights of wildlife while ignoring the simultaneous destruction of beneficial cultural traditions is foolish and dangerous. We need to embrace "the human" along with "the natural" and think of them as coterminous.

As Berry puts it: "When we include ourselves as parts or belongings of the world we are trying to preserve, then obviously we can no longer think of the world as 'the environment'—something out there around us. We can see that our relation to the world surpasses mere connection and verges on identity. And we can see that our right to live in this world, and our right to live simply nothing in Creation that does not matter." Including people.

GRAZING GUIDELINES TO BE RELEASED SOON

by Gary Simpson

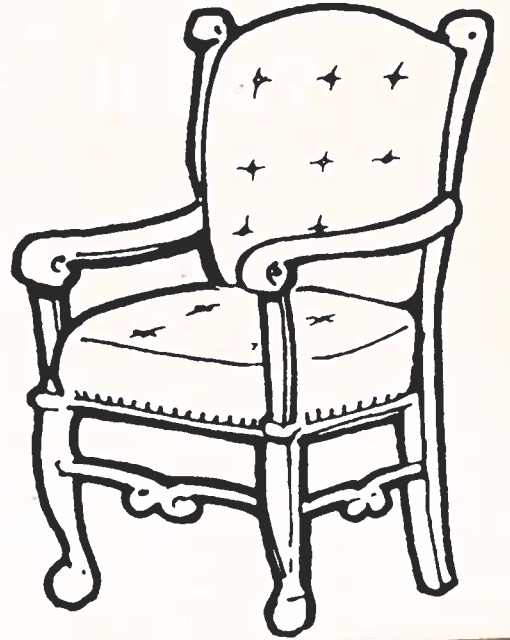
The New Mexico Resource Advisory Council has sent recommended standards and guidelines to the BLM for evaluation in the form of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement that is scheduled for release in late March 1997.

The Standards and Guidelines (S&G) contain guidelines that are fairly satisfying for the biotic communities, but all of the positive aspects of these S&G's are negated by the inclusion of a "Human Dimension" guideline that can be used as a "trojan horse" by the wise use movement to manipulate grazing decisions to the benefit of the status quo. All other guidelines would ultimately be held subservient to this guideline which would, in effect, place "culture and custom" equal to or higher in priority than scientific-based concerns in decisionmaking on BLM lands.

The acceptance of the RAC's Standards and Guidelines would set a destructive precedent that would slow or stop the few environmental safeguards that the BLM is considering. If this guideline is adopted, then the local culture, economy and customs would have to be considered in management decisions that affect not only grazing, but other resource management as well. We must not let this guideline be adopted.

The Uneasy Chair

by
Courtney White



Environmentalists must make a strong showing at the EIS hearings as well as submit many letters to reverse this guideline. As the DEIS comes nearer to fruition we will be sending out more alerts.

RAINBOW EXPEDITIONS II BACKPACKING TO BEAUTIFUL PLACES

SPRING - CANYONLANDS COUNTRY

- Apr 4-10 **Rainbow Plateau Cross-Country, AZ** \$520
Strenuous. 31 miles, ascend Cummings Mesa.
- Apr 13-19 **Mystery Canyons Canyoneering, UT** \$500
Strenuous. Short rappels, slickrock. Exploratory.
- Apr 19-25 **San Rafael Swell Canyons, UT** \$470
Moderately Strenuous. Cross-country & rugged terrain.
- Apr 27 - May 2 **Canyon del Muerto, AZ** \$655
Moderately Strenuous. 27 miles. (Sierra Club #97-036)
- May 4-10 **Paria Canyon Wilderness, UT & AZ** \$490
Moderate. 36 miles gentle downhill, crossing stream.
- May 5-11 **Coyote Gulch & Escalante Canyon** \$525
Light to Moderate. Only 17 miles, with a resupply.
- May 25-31 **Dark Canyon Wilderness, UT** \$480
Moderately Strenuous. 30 miles. From forest to desert.

SUMMER - CANOE TRIPS & HIGH SIERRA

- Jun 21-28 **Kern Canyon - Mt Whitney Loop** \$495
Strenuous. 10 mi/day on good trails. (Sierra Club #97-131)
- Boundary Waters Canoe Retreats, Minn. & Canada**
- Jun 29 - Jul 5 **Vegetarian Retreat** \$500
- July 6-12 **Twelve-Step Retreat** \$500
Light to Moderate. Quiet water, two short portages.
- Jul 20-26 **Yosemite Backpack Retreats, CA** \$470
- Jul 27 - Aug 2 **Repeat.** (1st trip is Sierra Club #97-151)
Moderate. We cross the divide from the Hoover Wilderness.
- Aug 9-16 **Kings Canyon National Park, CA** \$655
Strenuous. 42 miles. 7 lake basins & 3 high passes.

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Mining Issues Report

by
Abe Jacobson, Mining Issues Chair

The Mining Issues Committee of the Rio Grande Chapter is currently involved in several "live issues" in New Mexico. We are slowly but surely getting ourselves organized and in a better condition to fight effectively against certain proposed or existing operations which are against the public interest. We have people in the Dixon, Los Alamos, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Truth or Consequences, Las Cruces, and Silver City areas. We are also collaborating with national organizations, including with a task force of the Club, as well as with the Mineral Policy Center, and with grass-roots organizations in Taos, Questa, Dixon/Penasco, Jemez Springs, and T or C/Hillsboro/Kingston.

Mining Act

The first item to mention is the patient, well-coordinated, and gutsy negotiating done by our Chapter Chair, by our lobbyist, by the New Mexico Environmental Law Center, and by sister environmental organizations (New Mexico Conservation Voters Alliance, and Southwest Research and Information Center), across the table from the mining industry in this state. The issue was the possible introduction of legislation in the current legislative session to weaken the New Mexico Mining Act. In these negotiations, our team made a determined effort both to learn what the industry has in mind, and to defend our core interests. (See story, page 1.)

Copper Flats

The second item to mention is the determined effort by folks from T or C/Hillsboro/Kingston to force more environmental and Mining Act compliance by the proposed Copper Flats mine. This copper (and a bit of molybdenum) operation by Alta Gold would remove over 80 million tons of rock from a large open pit, would leave 60 million tons of "waste rock" in large dumps on the ground, would pass the rest through an on-site crusher and flotation mill, and would spew liquid mill residues into a one-square-mile earthen-dammed tailings impoundment. The project will result in massive and long-term degradation of the natural landscape, in a permanent excavated pit acting as an evaporative sump on the aquifer, in a long-term risk of acid runoff from the oxidizing pyritic waste heaps, in a long-term risk of groundwater pollution from the tailings impoundment, and in a threat to the integrity of surrounding, fully adjudicated water resources during the 13 years of operation. Apart from all that, Copper Flats is great!

The fight against Copper Flats is being waged both by very well-informed local activists (who stand to lose the most from the presently proposed mine), and by the NM Environmental Law Center and its team of technical professionals. The latter are consulting for the nearby Ladder Ranch in support of the Ranch's opposition to the mine proposal. The Mining and Minerals Division held a hearing on 6-9 February in T or C on

both the permit application and a request for a variance which would waive the normal Mining Act requirement for 12 months of continual gathering of baseline data. The Division will weigh the evidence presented at the hearing, and will then decide whether (a) to grant the variance and (b) to approve the permit. The Law Center and the local folks poked enough holes in the Alta case, I believe, that Mining and Minerals no longer has a legitimate way of giving Alta both things.

Summo Mine

Another big mine issue, this one far earlier in the process, is the proposed Summo copper mine near the Picuris Pueblo. This would be the mine from hell: An acid-leach operation on a high point between two watersheds which are both under study for inclusion in the national Wild and Scenic River system. The Summo mine would rob clean water from the aquifer and replace it with possibly contaminated mine-waste runoff. The Pueblo, the Rio Pueblo/Rio Embudo Watershed Coalition, Amigos Bravos, and the Sierra Club are working together to plan intelligent and effective opposition to this mine.

Copar Pumice

Two mines by Copar Pumice were approved in December by the Santa Fe National Forest. We are presently appealing both the Record of Decision for the El Cajete mine, and the Decision Notice for the South Pit mine, under NEPA, to the Southwest Regional Office of the Forest Service. We are also gearing up for the New Mexico Mining Act process in both cases.

Finally, Sally Smith in Silver City continues to represent the public interest as regards mining in the Southwest New Mexico Designated National Sacrifice Area.

Help!

The Mining Issues Committee needs more members. We are an informal working organization of the Rio Grande Chapter, spending zero time on administrative stuff, and lots of time "in the trenches." If you too would like to experience trench warfare, or if you could help out behind the lines, please contact me: jacobson@ni.net, (505) 672-9579.



Road Through Petroglyphs

(con't from page 1)

he explained. Clearly, Domenici is of the old school that ignores the huge costs of sprawl on all levels, and thinks instead of big roads as the fuse to ignite more and more growth, thereby creating wealth for landowners and developers.

Polls Oppose Road

I reminded Senator Domenici of the polls showing that 63% of the registered voters in Bernalillo County wanted the Monument protected without exception, opposed the extension of Paseo through the petroglyphs, and would pay more for alternatives. Although he responded that polls weren't always reliable, and that the Mayor's and his own popularity would prevail, I sensed that he was uneasy authoring legislation that would be unpopular and could be particularly costly if there was an ugly fight with Bingaman and Babbitt. Pete hasn't forgotten the messy detonation of his plans for road legislation last year when word got out in the *Albuquerque Journal* before he could get all his ducks in line. Clearly, he wants the administration and Jeff on board, if at all possible, and that's why he called the meeting. And this year, the *journal*, which has a strong pro-Paseo bias, is carefully suppressing the story, although the *Tribune* has run it on the front page.

Avalanche of Objections

What made Domenici's plans blow up last year is exactly what can create the same result this year: a massive avalanche of letters, faxes, phone calls and e-mail from the grassroots, the overwhelming majority of people who object strongly to ramming a commuter road through a unit of the National Park System, desecrating a Native American sacred area, and lining the pockets of landowners and developers while dumping the costs of sprawl on the backs of everyone else. In your own words, send this message strongly to Sen. Domenici (Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-6621, FAX 224-7371), Sen. Bingaman (Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-5521, FAX 224-2852), and Interior Secretary Babbitt (1849 C St, NW, Washington DC 20240, (202) 208-4123, FAX 219-1220).

Below: Rinconada Canyon, Petroglyph National Monument

ADOPT-A-RUIN!!

The Santa Fe National Forest and the Sierra Club are looking for a FEW GOOD VOLUNTEERS to act as site stewards on archaeological ruins. This is a brand new cooperative program designed to help protect our valuable (and vanishing) cultural resources. Volunteers are needed to visit an archaeological site on a regular basis and write a brief report to the Forest Service. It's critically important work!!

How to Adopt-A-Ruin: A free, in-field training session for archaeological site stewards will be held in Garcia Canyon on Sunday, May 11, 1997. The training will be led by Mike Bremer, supervisory archaeologist for the Santa Fe National Forest, and assisted by Courtney White and Gen Head. Come learn more about prehistoric sites and how to help them!! For more information, call Courtney at 982-5502.



February 26, 1997

We are concerned that the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Disposal Phase Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS-II) does not meet the requirements of NEPA with regard to assessing environmental impacts of significant federal actions.

The environmental impact statement is designed to be a full disclosure document, which gives decisionmakers relevant information on the environmental consequences of a major federal action before a decision on that action is made. According to 40 CFR 1500.1(b): "The information [in the EIS] must be of high quality, . . . accurate scientific analyses, expert agency comments, and public scrutiny are essential to implementing NEPA."

It has not been demonstrated that the SEIS-II meets this criterion.

Accurate Scientific Analyses

The Conceptual Models Peer Review Team, assigned to review WIPP conceptual modeling, has voiced concern over two of the Department of Energy's (DOE's) conceptual models: spallings, and chemically engineered backfill, which is one type of barrier designed to "significantly decrease the mobility of radionuclides. . ." (40 CFR 191.12)

Spallings. "Spallings" refers to the entrainment of waste during the venting of high pressure gas from the repository in the event of a drilling intrusion. The spallings model is essential to the safe disposal of TRU waste. WIPP is surrounded by oil and gas wells as well as potash mines. Mining could, as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has pointed out, alter the properties of certain rock formations above the underground repository. Changes to the rock formations above surface could cause alterations in the hydrogeology of the rock formations, specifically groundwater travel time. Human intrusion through oil and gas drilling into the repository through to the briny aquifer is also cause for concern.

The Environmental Evaluation Group (EEG), established in 1978 to perform an independent technical review of WIPP for the State of New Mexico, has told the EPA that there is insufficient basis for the selection of certain conceptual models, the spallings model being one of them. "EEG finds no justification for assuming only an 8% probability of intercepting a pressurized brine reservoir in the Castile Formation, 800 feet below the repository." EEG goes on to say that the repository has been relocated twice in response to encountering pressurized brine reservoirs. "The EEG position is that a brine reservoir, most likely the same [one] that was encountered by WIPP-12, should be assumed to extend under the [current] repository. . ."

Barriers. EEG found that DOE's engineered barriers are inconsistent with definitions used by other agencies, such as the Nuclear Regulatory Agency (NRC) definition at Yucca Mountain. The only barriers that DOE is planning to use are seals for the shafts leading to the underground repository. According to EEG, "The shaft and panel seals and borehole plugs are at best attempts to undo the damage done to the natural environment when the shafts were excavated and therefore cannot be considered to be engineered barriers as distinct and complementary to the natural barriers." We agree with EEG. . .

Alternatives

We are also concerned that the Alternatives section does not meet the requirements of NEPA. In particular, we wonder if the alternatives presented meet the court test of "reasonableness." According to 40 CFR 1502.14, "Alternatives including the proposed action": "This section is the heart of the environmental impact statement. . . [and should]

"(a) Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated."

Reasonable Alternatives. The courts have stated that agencies do not need to consider all alternatives, only reasonable ones. But at least two of the alternatives discussed by DOE are not even legal under the enabling law, the WIPP Land Withdrawal Act (LWA). Under the LWA, only defense-related transuranic (TRU) waste may be emplaced at

WIPP. Alternatives #1 and #3 call for emplacing non-defense-related waste. Alternative #2 exceeds the limits of RH-TRU (remote handled) waste allowed to be emplaced under the New Mexico/DOE Compliance and Certification Agreement (C&C Agreement). These alternatives therefore do not seem to meet the reasonableness requirement of NEPA. Reasonable alternatives would seem to include the different treatment options discussed, but on the legally allowable Basic Inventory, rather than on the Additional Inventory (which includes non-defense-related waste). Another reasonable alternative would be alternate transportation scenarios. Please see the Transportation section below.

Misleading Characterization of the No Action Alternative 2. The No Action Alternative 2, leaving waste at the generator sites, seems to be mischaracterized in the SEIS-II. The August 1995 DOE Draft Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement provides calculations that indicate **leaving the waste at the generator sites indefinitely rather than disposing of it at WIPP would result in fewer cancer fatalities, a smaller collective radiation dose, and a cheaper cost.** Yet, the discussion in Summary of Impacts suggests that many more people would be in danger from continuing to store waste at the generator sites: "If the waste were released, either by loss of institutional control or by natural disaster, estimated deaths would total 2,325 over 10,000 years, given current population densities and distribution. Future increases in population densities near TRU waste storage sites could increase the number of estimated deaths. . ."

This is misleading.

Under the Proposed Action, most TRU waste will continue to be stored at the generator sites because at least 50% of waste in the Overall Inventory is non-defense-related, and therefore ineligible for emplacement at WIPP. Thus, a program to deal with the waste still stored at generator sites will have to be undertaken. WIPP does not solve the problem of potential radiation releases at the generator sites. It does not protect the people around the generator sites—it just endangers people all around the country who are not currently in danger from nuclear waste.

If there is a danger of radiation release due to "loss of institutional control or natural disaster," that danger continues to exist whether or not WIPP opens.

Alternatives Eliminated From Detailed Study. It is unclear why the alternative of future technology "to neutralize or change the natural rate of radioactive decay" was not seriously considered. Physicists in New Mexico have testified that such technologies should be explored, and the government has programs to develop new technologies in all areas. Why is this one not considered to be viable? What doesn't seem viable is continuing to produce nuclear waste when we have no safe and reliable way to dispose of it.

Transportation

Rail Transit. It is unclear why rail transit, which the SEIS-II acknowledges is 10 times safer than truck transit, has not been taken seriously as an alternative. Regular rail transit is also less expensive. Dedicated rail shipments, arguably safer, are certainly more costly. But is the government saying that money is more important than the lives of its citizens? That seems to be the bottom line. We are not talking here about the Flycatcher or the Snaildarter. We are talking about human beings, who will, according to the SEIS-II, die from exposure to radiation from the transportation of nuclear waste, whether there is an accident or not. If money is the issue, then leaving the waste at the generator sites should be the preferred alternative.

It is important to remember that TRU waste is not "low-level waste." It includes 141 radioactive elements, 47 organic and 13 non-organic contaminants of concern. An individual exposed for one hour to organic and inorganic contaminants at concentrations meeting emergency response 3 (ERG3) guidelines would develop or experience a life-threatening effect. The SEIS-II considers exposure time for its accident scenarios to be less than 30 minutes. How that time is arrived at, when DOE's satellite tracking alert system requires from one to five hours for regionalized staff to arrive at an accident scene, is unclear. A safer

transportation system would seem to be the most important alternative to consider.

Transport along St. Francis Drive. The SEIS-II does not consider the consequences of transport along St. Francis Drive in Santa Fe. It says that the route will be the Relief Route. But WIPP is being readied for opening in November, long before the relief route can be completed. The New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department recorded 366 accidents in 1995 on St. Francis Drive alone, all involving a moving vehicle and damages of \$500 or more. Since no evacuation plan or alternate routing exists for WIPP trucks on St. Francis, the probability of a WIPP truck being stopped in traffic on St. Francis is significant, increasing the exposure to cancer-causing radiation for many Santa Fe residents and tourists. The probability of an accident involving a WIPP truck is also greater on St. Francis Drive than on the relief route. But that has not been taken into consideration in the SEIS-II.

Other Impacts Not Considered

Socioeconomic Impacts. In *People Against Nuclear Energy v. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission* (1982) 678 F2d 222, a case involving the re-opening of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant, the plaintiffs suggested that ". . . communities [would be] severely damaged. . . because fear of nuclear accidents will diminish citizen confidence in local institutions, cause local businesses and residents to leave the area, and discourage potential newcomers who perceive the area as an undesirable location." (678 F2d at 230) The Court agreed that this was a "classic 'socio-economic' issue" which needed to be considered in an EIS. "Deterioration of a community's economic base or social stability. . . is a cognizable 'secondary effect' important under NEPA. . ." and must be evaluated. (678 F2d at 230) Socioeconomic considerations, including considerations of environmental justice, have been discussed in the SEIS-II with regard to the area surrounding WIPP. But they have not been considered for areas such as Santa Fe which stand to face significant socioeconomic impacts. The City of Santa Fe is on record as saying that it does not want WIPP trucks going through the city. Santa Fe businesses experienced a dramatic drop in tourism due to the perception of danger from the Hanta Virus, which was detected in Farmington, not Santa Fe. A WIPP-related accident in or near Santa Fe could have a much more devastating impact.

Psychological Impacts. *PANE v. NRC* also discussed the need to evaluate potential psychological effects from the proposed action. The Court said that Congress meant "health and safety" to include mental health. The fear of radiation exposure from WIPP trucks will certainly have an effect on the communities along the transportation routes. It needs to be evaluated.

Cumulative Impacts

"[I]t is well settled that cumulative impacts of a proposed federal action must be analyzed in an EIS." (*Town of Huntington v. Marsh* [2d Cir 1988] 859 F2d 1134, 1142)

The SEIS-II does not in fact take into account cumulative impacts of radiation exposure on the people of New Mexico, nor does it address the synergistic effects of exposure to multiple chemicals AND radiation. Remember, 60% of the waste to be emplaced at WIPP also contains hazardous waste as defined by RCRA.

Conclusion

WIPP is merely a device to allow the continued production of nuclear waste from unneeded nuclear weapons research. **Much of the waste which is to be emplaced at WIPP has not yet been generated**—62,000 cubic meters of TRU waste is currently stored. That Basic Inventory is estimated to rise to 135,000 cubic meters by 2033. If, indeed, WIPP were a solution to our nuclear waste problem, there would be much less opposition to it. But it is not. Nuclear waste will continue to endanger people around the generator sites, it will continue to endanger people along the transportation routes to WIPP, and it will continue to endanger people around the WIPP site. And there is no suggestion that, when WIPP is full, the government will stop producing even more nuclear waste.

We need a solution to the nuclear waste problem. WIPP, however, is not that solution. Barbara H. Johnson
For the Executive Committee

Chapter Expresses Concerns over WIPP

In recent weeks, the Chapter has testified at public hearings on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS-II) for WIPP, sent a letter to the EPA regarding the Department of Energy's Compliance Certification Application (CCA), and sent this letter to DOE regarding the SEIS. The Chapter has also "signed on" to a similar letter produced by Susan Maret of the Sierra Club's National Nuclear Waste Task Force.

EPA must accept DOE's CCA as meeting EPA standards for nuclear waste disposal, and the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the project must be completed and a Record of Decision issued to allow WIPP to open. DOE and Westinghouse, WIPP manager, are shooting for a target date of November for that opening. The Chapter will continue to follow this issue and take part in all opportunities for public comment.

Help Build Public Support for a New Mexico BLM Wilderness Bill

Attend the Organizational Meeting of the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition
April 12, 1997
10:15 a.m.
New Mexico Tech Library
Socorro

Everyone interested is welcome to attend
For more information, call John Wright, 247-4353

Washington Report: Through the Looking Glass Again

by Richard Barish



NO LOGGING DEBATE!!

**Chad Hanson, Chair
of the Sierra Club's
National No Logging
Task Force,
Will Debate
Bill DeBuys, author
and conservationist,
on the merits of the
Sierra Club's new
national policy
banning all
commercial logging
on public land**

**Tuesday, March 18,
7pm
Unitarian Church
Santa Fe**

**Everyone is
welcome!!**

**Sponsored by the
Santa Fe Group of the
Sierra Club**

**For more information,
call Courtney White,
(505) 982-5502**

Alice looked around her in great surprise. "Why I do believe we've been under this tree the whole time! Everything's just as it was!"

"Of course it is," said the Queen. "what would you have it?"

"Well, in our country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else—if you ran very fast for a long time, as we've been doing."

"A slow sort of country!" said the Queen. "Now, here you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"

Lewis Carroll, *THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS*, Chapter II

In that world through a looking glass that is also known as Washington, D.C., the 105th Congress is now in session. The question for environmentalists is: have we run furiously for the last two years only to discover that, like Alice, we are in the same place we started from, again forced to defend the environment from repeated assaults by congressional Republicans? Or have we run twice as fast as Alice and outrun the congressional greed-mongers and their legislation that attempts to maximize corporate profits at the cost of the health of our communities and the natural world?

Over the last two years, the Republicans have taken a well-deserved beating over the environment. The numerous anti-environmental measures that they introduced precipitated a substantial public backlash, and the environment was an important issue, sometimes even a deciding factor, cutting against the Republicans in congressional races across the country in 1996. Sen. John McCain (R-AZ; 1996 League of Conservation Voters rating: 11%) publicly urged his party to moderate its stance on environmental issues.

Form over Substance

Nonetheless, there are indications that any changes in the Republican environmental agenda may be more of form than of substance. Rep. Tom DeLay (R-TX; 1996 LCV rating: 4%), the House Majority Whip, has promised to be more careful about what he says about the environment, not to change what he does.

The conservative Heritage Foundation has suggested that Republicans simply avoid using words like "relief" and "reform," which now apparently have negative connotations thanks to their abuse in the last Congress.

Key Committees in Anti-Environment Hands

Moreover, the Republicans have continued to place key committee chairmanships in the hands of the most extreme anti-environmental legislators. Committee chairs include Sen. Frank Murkowski (R-AK; 1996 LCV rating: 0%), Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee; Rep. Don Young (R-AK; 1996 LCV rating: 4%), House Resources Committee; Rep.

Michael Oxley (R-OH; 1996 LCV rating: 4%), the House Commerce Subcommittee on Finance and Hazardous Materials; Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK; 1996 LCV rating: 4%), Senate Clean Air, Wetlands, Private Property and Nuclear Safety Subcommittee; and Rep. Helen "How can salmon be endangered when I can go the supermarket and buy a can?" Chenoweth (R-ID; 1996 LCV rating: 0%), a new House Forest and Forest Health subcommittee.

Harmful Bills Introduced

A number of bills harmful to the environment have already been introduced, and more are reported to be in the works. Some of these measures are:

> Sen. Larry Craig (R-ID; 1996 LCV rating: 0%) is circulating a draft of legislation that would roll back protections for our National Forests and make commodity uses such as logging the primary purposes of National Forests.

> Sen. Murkowski and Sen. Craig have introduced the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1997, S. 104, which would severely weaken environmental standards for nuclear waste disposal.

> Sen. Dirk Kempthorne (R-ID; 1996 LCV rating: 0%) and Sen. John Chafee (R-RI; 1996 LCV rating: 70%) are circulating a draft rewrite of the Endangered Species Act that would substantially weaken the protections for endangered species.

> Sen. Robert Smith (R-NH; 1996 LCV rating: 15%) has introduced legislation to amend the Superfund law that would limit the number of sites that may be added to the cleanup program, limit protection for groundwater, and roll back liability for some industrial polluters.

> Congressman Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD; 1996 LCV rating: 69%) and Senator Ted Stevens (R-AL; 1996 LCV rating: 4%) have reintroduced legislation to allow the "dolphin safe" label to be used on tuna caught by means that do not prevent dolphin mortality.

Some Promising Signs

However, there are also a few promising signs. An unusual coalition led by House Budget Committee Chairman John Kasich (R-OH; 1996 LCV rating: 27%) and including environmental groups, consumer groups, and fiscally conservative groups such as the National Taxpayers' Union has launched a campaign to end corporate subsidies. Among the subsidies initially targeted are logging roads and the Animas-La Plata project, an environmentally destructive water project proposed for southwestern Colorado. In addition, in the first important environmental vote of the 105th Congress, the House, by a narrow margin of 220-209, voted to release funds for international family planning efforts. (Rep. Steve Schiff [1996 LCV rating: 23%] and former Rep. Bill Richardson [1996 LCV rating: 88%] voted in favor of releasing the funds, while Rep. Joe Skeen [1996 LCV rating: 4%] voted against release.) And in a speech

before the American Farm Bureau Federation, Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA; 1996 LCV rating: %) reportedly indicated that he will slow down attempts to pass property rights legislation, suggesting that the Republican party leadership may, at least on some issues, attempt to reign in the anti-environmental extremists in the party.

As the political landscape begins to take form in the dawn of the 105th Congress, some details of the terrain thus appear all too familiar to environmentalists. But there may yet be at least a few refreshing new vistas to be revealed in the full light of day.

Contact your Representatives

Call the Capitol Switchboard and ask for your Congressman or Senators:

(202) 224-3121

Call President Clinton at

(202) 456-1111

Call Newt Gingrich at

(202) 225-0600

Write your representatives at these addresses:

Congressman Steve Schiff (R-NM)

Congressman Joe Skeen (R-NM)

Congressman Silvestre Reyes (D-TX)

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

Write the President at

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

Washington, D.C. 20500

Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM)

Senator Pete Dominici (R-NM)

Senator Phil Gramm (R-TX)

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison

(R-TX)

U.S. Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

Fax to these numbers:

Sen. Bingaman (202) 224-2852

Sen. Domenici (202) 224-7371

On the Internet:

Jeff Bingaman:

Senator_Bingaman@bingaman.senate.gov

Newt Gingrich:

georgia6@hr.house.gov

The White House:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov>



AN UNUSUAL REQUEST TO ALL MEMBERS:

Please put the chapter in your March budget this year! You'll soon receive our once-a-year only mailing with an appeal for a generous contribution to support the local conservation work of the chapter. All funds received will strictly be used for local efforts. Watch your mailbox for the chapter's letter and, please send a generous contribution in March!

GOING WITH THE FLOW. . .

by Vickie Gabin

Unless you've been out of the country, you've seen extensive media coverage on Albuquerque's new Water Resources Management Strategy. Recently approved by Mayor Chavez, and now pending approval before the City Council, the Strategy represents major changes in city water management and a drastic switch from using groundwater to surface water supplies for municipal use.

The Strategy raises a host of environmental and social questions, none of which have been addressed yet, and all of which beg for increased public awareness and participation. It is imperative that the Sierra Club and other environmental interests closely monitor the upcoming NEPA process and each design and construction phase so that Albuquerque's gains don't come at the expense of the environment.

Aquifer Levels Declining

In a nutshell, recent hydrologic studies have shown that the high quality,

The Group's Financial Situation Could Improve in '97

by Susan Gorman

Every September over 100 Albuquerque Sierrans participate in the Group's major fundraising project, selling parking spaces in the parking lot in front of the office to State Fairgoers. The revenue we make during this three-week period of intense work plus \$1.00 from each member's dues, and the slim profits from the sales of books and calendars, provide the total income for the Group.

Approximate income:	
Parking Lot sales	\$7000
Group share of member dues	\$2700
Book & Calendar earnings	\$ 600
TOTAL	\$10,300

(If you just read in the paper that the National Sierra Club has a budget of \$48 million, this may amaze you!)

The normal expenses include office rent and utilities, phone, Internet (a part of the cost of the Homepage and Sierra List), postage and copies. We send a representative to the Rio Grande Chapter meetings and pay the mileage. We provide the drinks and ice and such for picnics, other gatherings and the Holiday party.

The rest is reserved for our campaigns to protect the environment. This means printing and mailing those alerts you receive and expenses like phone, copies and postage. We have helped pay for activists to attend conferences and seminars to improve their skills, obtain information and meet other activists.

The Group has proven year after year that it is possible to make a big difference without spending big bucks!

But what if we had more money to spend? The ExCom members have been thinking and talking about this, and we concluded that, if we really had more, we could spend it effectively!

So we decided that we need to learn more about fundraising. To assist us, the ExCom has hired Jim Engle, Pinnacle Fund Raising Services. Pinnacle provides services to non-profit environmental and environmental education organizations. Their special focus is on fundraising. Jim is very good at what he does. We have asked him to facilitate a workshop for us, and he agreed.

In preparation for the workshop, Jim has prepared a survey to provide information about everyone's background, skills, hobbies and ideas for new fundraising projects. If you received a survey, please complete and return it. If you didn't and are interested in fundraising, please contact me! During the Workshop, he will help us to consider our financial needs, the current sources of funds and the future possibilities. He has plenty of knowledge about fundraising methods and he can help us to understand what can be done.

We invite you to participate! The Fund Raising Workshop will be on March 22, 10:00 AM, Sierra Club Office. Contact Susan Gorman, TEL: 505-265-3231, FAX: 505-256-0373, EMail: bblairb@aol.com

Group Hires Administrative Assistant

by Susan Gorman

Did you know that until January 1997, all of the great work that the Albuquerque Group did was totally done by volunteers? That's really something to feel good about because we have really accomplished great things (see "What's in a Name, A Report from the Chair," *Rio Grande Sierran*, Jan/Feb, 1997).

But, all of this activity means that the Group is facing increasing demands for activist time and energy to implement the Conservation Campaigns. At the same time, there is a certain amount of other work to do, like opening mail and checking messages at the office, sending out information packages to potential new members and other really important stuff. We have been fortunate to have volunteer office organizers who have done this essential work but we felt the need to make sure that it is done consistently. Therefore, the ExCom made the decision to hire an Administrative Assistant and, late in 1996, we began to search for someone to work 2 to 4 hours per week.

We had several great candidates and, in January, we hired Barbara Ford. She is from Austria and a student at UNM studying Community and Regional Planning. She has been an activist in the grassroots environmental movement for five years (mainly in Austria and Russia) and her special interests lie in energy-related issues, particularly energy efficiency. She lives in a Co-Housing Community in Albuquerque.

Her first challenge was to organize the phone tree, which she finished just in time for the New Mexico Legislative Session. (Thanks to all of you who are Phone Tree branches, twigs and leaves!)

We welcome Barbara's assistance and know that she will play a key role in helping the Group be more effective.

deep water aquifer that underlies much of the middle Rio Grande Valley (and supplies all of Albuquerque's water) is not at all as plentiful as was once believed. Water levels in the aquifer are decreasing at an alarming rate even at the current population. The studies also show that the hydraulic connection between the aquifer and the Rio Grande is much weaker than originally thought, so that most of the river water that the city counted on to recharge the aquifer and offset pumping effects isn't doing so.

If the city continues to deplete the aquifer, well pumping costs will increase and water quality will decrease, because the water at the lower part of the aquifer will be harder to pump and is of lower quality. Also arsenic has been found throughout the ground water, and in high enough concentrations at certain points to force the city to shut down two wells. The land surface will subside—as the aquifer compacts, the ground will sink, resulting in damage to streets, pipelines, homes, and buildings. In times of drought—a tough, long-term drought—there will be no reserve left to draw on. Even with 30% conservation, the aquifer will not support the current population for long.

New Policy--Surface Water

Albuquerque's new water policy will decrease Albuquerque's reliance on the aquifer, establish a ten-year drought reserve, and use a sustainable supply of surface water. The city already owns a considerable amount of river water—water from the San Juan Chama Project originates in the San Juan Basin in Colorado and is piped to New Mexico, diverted into the Chama River, and from there runs to the Rio Grande and down to Albuquerque. The city also has rights to native Rio Grande water.

Key components of the Strategy now include: infiltration galleries (similar to French drains) to divert the water from the river along the Bosque, a water treatment plant to purify the water to drinking water quality, new pipelines to transmit the treated water to customers, and water recycling facilities to provide lower-quality water for parks and other large turf areas. The project should be completed in 2004.

The Albuquerque Group ExCom has signed off on the Strategy, with the proviso that the Club cannot endorse infiltration galleries as a method of diverting river water until other diversion alternatives are evaluated in the EIS. Water management doesn't happen in a vacuum, of course, and there's a laundry list of other concerns which provide a larger context for this project:

- protecting the Bosque, Rio Grande and Rio Chama ecosystems and flow regimes from construction activities and alterations in flows;
- ensuring that the city will pay more than lip service to "sustainable development," and will recognize that there will be an end to the population we can sustain;
- preserving the open space and irrigated agriculture which contribute to a large percentage of aquifer recharge in the middle valley;
- encouraging greater conservation efforts and, in the face of inevitable rate increases, examining the current rate structure for fairness and conservation values;
- promoting education about Albuquerque's water needs, the current water supply situation, and principles of sustainable development as they relate to water.

The real work is yet to come - monitoring the implementation process to ensure that NEPA compliance procedures are more than rubber stamp gestures, and encouraging more communication between water management, zoning, and planning and development authorities.

You can help—come to the Water Customer Advisory Committee's (CAC's) public meetings, and keep me informed of issues to bring to the attention of Public Works. If you are hydrologically or otherwise scientifically inclined, help me to evaluate the project components in terms of potential environmental impacts. Talk to me at 243-3024.

For more information from the city, call Charlene Sandoval at the Public Works Department, 768-2562 and request the Water Resources Management Strategy. Also request to be notified about upcoming CAC meetings and public forums.

Note: Vickie Gabin is the Sierra Club's representative to the Water Customer Advisory Committee (CAC). CAC members worked with the water resources project team during the formulation of Albuquerque's new water policy, and intend to continue providing public input to the Public Works water folks.

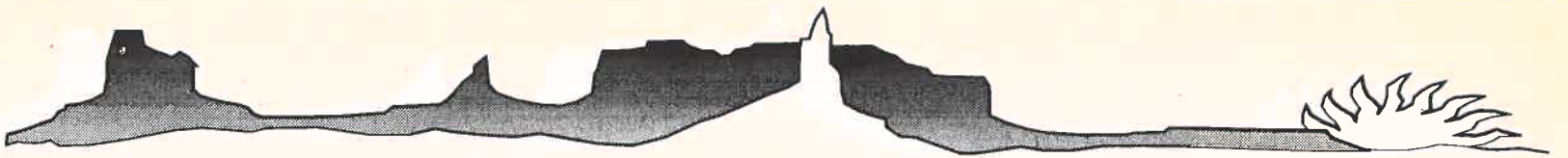
Fundraising Workshop

When: March 22, 10:00 AM

Where: Sierra Club Office

Who: Albuquerque Group members interested in helping raise money. Members of other Groups are welcome, too!

Please RSVP to Susan Gorman, TEL: 505-265-3231, EMail: bblairb@aol.com



March 17, 1997 General Meeting
7:30 p.m. UNM Law School Rm. 2401
Bicycle Facilities in Albuquerque

Susan Kelly, City of Albuquerque Planning Department, and a representative of the JHK & Associates Consulting firm, will speak about the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and other issues related to bicycling in the City of Albuquerque. There will also be some information on issues at the state and national level that affect bicycling, in particular, the Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act which is up for renewal this year. We will also discuss the City-sponsored plans for Bike Month (May) Bike-to-Work Day (May 20) which will include breakfast stops around town (including Montano Bridge).

General Meetings are held on the third Monday of every month at 7:30 PM at the UNM Law School, Room 2401, on the corner of Mountain Road and Stanford NE. UNM is currently enforcing parking restrictions. Please park at the metered slots (bring quarters!) or on the street or buy a one-time-only permit (\$3) at the Law Library.

Bring your own cups for refreshments during the break.

There will be no April General Meeting.

Instead, please join us for the

Sustainable Albuquerque Team Meeting, April 8

Conservation Meeting, April 28.

Both meetings are at 7:00 PM, Sierra Club Office

Why Do We Need A Regional Transit Authority?

by Susan Gorman

Background

In Spring 1994, Bernalillo County, working with Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments (MRGCOG) and the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department, initiated a study to determine the feasibility and need for a Regional Transit Authority (RTA). The study discovered what we already know... that the brown cloud is due to cars, that roads alone will not unspool worsening traffic congestion and that we need alternatives to Single Occupancy Vehicle travel. The study recommended that a Regional Transit Authority should be formed to provide those alternatives.

What's an RTA?

It is an entity which is specifically created to provide coordinated transit services for the entire region. The RTA can augment existing transportation infrastructure development by providing local and commuter transit; park and ride centers; ride pooling; and demand management programs. It can also develop feeder systems and infrastructure for high capacity systems like passenger rail.

Call your Senator and Representative, today!

The first step toward forming the RTA is to have the State Legislature pass enabling legislation (HB 669). The Senate bill will be introduced by the time you read this.

Make a call (505-986-4300) and urge your Senator and Representative to vote YES!

We need your help to convince legislators that this legislation is essential. It's important for the whole Middle Rio Grande Valley because it enables the RTA to begin the planning process so that the transportation needs of this growing population area will be met. It's important for the whole state because, sooner or later, other urban areas will need to implement regional transportation plans and this legislation will establish the legal structure.

Once the legislation is passed, an Interim RTA is established and the RTA Board members finalize the Regional Transit Service Plan, figure out what it will cost, and where the funds will come from. Then there is a confirmation election which gives the voters the chance to vote for creating the permanent RTA.

CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, meetings take place at the Club office, 207 San Pedro NE

Mar 1-2	Chapter ExCom and Conservation Meetings, El Paso
Mar 5	Deadline for agenda items for Group ExCom. Call Susan Gorman at 265-3231
Mar 10	Group ExCom, 7:00 PM
Mar 11	Earth Day Coalition Planning Meeting, 4:00 pm. Call Marge Williams, 262-1646
Mar 11	Sustainable Albuquerque Meeting, 7:00 PM. Call Susan Gorman, 265-3231
Mar 17	General Meeting, UNM Law School, Rm 2401, 7:30 PM. Susan Kelly, Albuquerque Bicycle Plan. See notice on this page.
Mar 19	Deadline for agenda items for Conservation Committee. Call Martin Heinrich, 345-7832
Mar 24	Conservation Committee Meeting, 7:00 PM
Mar 27	1000 Friends of New Mexico Breakfast Forum, 7:15 AM. Call 848-8232 for location.
Apr 8	Sustainable Albuquerque Meeting, 7:00 PM. Call Susan Gorman, 265-3231
Apr 9	Deadline for agenda items for Group ExCom. Call Susan Gorman at 265-3231
Apr 14	Group ExCom, 7:00 PM
Apr 15	Deadline for articles for May/June <i>Rio Grande Sierran</i>
Apr 22	Earth Day Celebration. Call Marge Williams, 262-1646, for information
Apr 23	Deadline for agenda items for Conservation Committee. Call Martin Heinrich, 345-7832
Apr 27	1000 Friends of New Mexico Breakfast Forum, 7:15 AM. Call 848-8232 for location.
Apr 28	Conservation Committee Meeting, 7:00 PM

The Transit Service Plan would include short-term improvements like Dial-A-Ride, Neighborhood Circulator Vans, Park N Ride Lots, Improved Bus Service and Bicycle Improvements. Long-term, we could anticipate more and bigger Park N Ride lots, Trolley, Light Rail, Intermodal Stations. . .

Public Input is Essential!

If we want the transit system to be one we'll like, we need to get involved in the process now. Albuquerque's Transit and Parking Department, under the visionary leadership of Ann Watkins, along with the other partners, is embarking on a big campaign to give us ample opportunities to participate. To learn more, call Elsie at 505-764-6122.

Group Directory

1997 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
 207 San Pedro NE
 Albuquerque, NM 87108
 Office Telephone: 265-5506
 Fax: 256-0373

Susan Gorman, Chair	265-3231	bblairb@aolcom
Jack Humphrey, Vice Chair	243-5319	kjl@swcp.com
Martin Heinrich, Conservation	345-7832	mtheinrich@aol.com
Blair Brown, Secretary	265-3231	bblairb@aol.com
Kathy Love, Treasurer	243-5319	kjl@swcp.com
Richard Barish	247-8079	rdbarish@aol.com
Julie Hicks	345-7832	mtheinrich@aol.com
Jamie Grebosky	821-6455	
	71203.2762@compuserve.com	
Beth McDonald	254-2010	

The Albuquerque Group of the Sierra Club depends entirely on the efforts of volunteers. To help, call any of us!

ADMINISTRATION

Administrative Assistant	Barbara Ford	246-8490/246-2657
	truffula@usa.net	
Books/Calendars	Larry Compton	899-0679
Information Technology	Blair Brown	265-3231
	bblairb@aol.com	
Media Coordinator	Julie Hicks	345-7832
Membership	Barbara Stone	265-5304
	Barbara_Stone@somasf.unm.edu	
Newsletter	OPEN	
Outings	Tom Leck	256-7217
	Thomas_Leck@nmenv.state.nm.gov	
Phone Tree	Barbara Ford	246-8490/246-2657
Political Chair	OPEN	
Programs	Sustainable Albuquerque Team	

CONSERVATION

Conservation Chair	Martin Heinrich	345-7832
	mtheinrich@aol.com	
Campaign Team Leaders		
Bosque Protection	Richard Barish	247-8079
East Mountain	Nick Persampieri	281-7845
Petroglyph National Monument	Ike Eastvold	255-7679
Petroglyph Protection Coalition	Julie Hicks	345-7832
Sustainable Albuquerque	Susan Gorman	265-3231
War on the Environment	Richard Barish	247-8079
Western New Mexico	Barbara Leonard	862-7915
Wilderness	Jack Humphrey	
	Kathy Love	243-5319
	John Wright	247-4353
	wright@apsicc.aps.edu	
Wildlife	Martin Heinrich	345-7832

Outings may be cancelled or changed due to weather or other reasons, please call leader before outing. You must bring appropriate shoes, clothes, pack, rain gear, and water.

Sat 1 Mar Moderate
Miles: 4-6 Car: 240

X/C Ski - Amole Canyon

A beautiful X/C ski area just outside of Taos. Bring lunch and dress in layers. Please contact trip leader for details.

Leader: Stan Kauchak 839-4301

Sun 16 Mar Moderate
Miles: 6-7 Car: 120

Hike - Tapia Canyon

We will hike in to the canyon to view petroglyphs and some nearby Anazasi ruins. Meeting place will be in the parking lot behind the Winchell's Donut Shop at Academy and San Mateo Streets N.E. at 8:30 am.

Sun 16 Mar Leisure
Miles: 3 Car: 3

Hike - Oxbow

Various waterfowl, some hawks, and other wildlife can be seen in this wetland within Albuquerque. The hike will take about three hours. Please call the trip leader for the meeting time and place.

Leader: David Morrison 344-8693

Sat/Sun 22-23 Mar Moderate
Miles: 5 Car: 300

Hike and Full Moon Campout at White Sands Monument

We will do the short backpacking hike into the back country camping area at White Sands National Monument. The full moon will be just one day away, so the night on the white dunes should be about perfect. Please call the leader for details.

Leader: Tom Leck 256-7217

Sat 22 Mar Moderate
Miles: 5-6 Car: 160

Hike - Empedrado Wilderness Study Area

Let's explore the attributes of this WSA west of Cabezón. We should find some interesting landscape carved from Cretaceous sandstone and shale, and if we are real lucky some archaeological and fossil sites might also be encountered. Please call leader for more details.

Leader: Tom Petencin 255-1497

Sat 22 Mar Moderate
Miles: 5-8 Car: 180

Hike - Magdalena Mountains

Moderate-level hiking in the beautiful Magdalena Mountains on a trail to be determined. Please call the leader for more details.

Leader: Georgia 881-9365

Sat 5 Apr Leisure
Miles: 3 Car: 170

Hike - Trinity Site

The Trinity Site, birthplace of the atomic age, is open only twice a year. We will hike in to visit Ground Zero, a truly eerie, yet fascinating place. Afterwards? Perhaps a visit to the Owl Cafe would be in order.

Leader: Tom Leck 256-7217

Sun 13 Apr Leisure
Miles: 3 Car: 3

Hike - Rio Grande Bosque

We will hike to the bosque north of Central Avenue. The entire hike should take about three hours. Please call the trip leader for the meeting time and place.

Leader: David Morrison 344-8693

Sun 13 Apr Moderate
Miles: 8 Car: 25

Hike - Las Huertas Canyon

We will hike the North Crest Trail to China Wall Trail to Trail #247 from Osha Springs into Las Huertas Canyon. Issues regarding the management of Las Huertas Canyon continue to be litigated.

Leader: Marion Davidson 867-5178

Sat 19 Apr Leisure - Moderate
Miles: 4-5 Car: 180

Hike - El Malpais Lava Tubes

The lava tubes of El Malpais are absolutely huge. We will hike through Four Windows Cave and perhaps Braided Cave, depending on road conditions. Please call for details.

Leader: Tom Leck 256-7217

Sat 19 Apr Leisure
Miles: 1-2 Car: 120

Hike - Rio Grande Bosque Habitat Management in San Acacia

An issue oriented hike. We will examine a portion of the proposed Rio Grande levy construction and the effects of that construction on bosque habitat and river character. USFWS personnel may accompany us to offer additional insight. Please phone leader for information.

Leader: Gary Simpson 898-6249

Sun 20 Apr Leisure - Moderate
Miles: 3 Car: 10

Hike - Canyon Rinconada - Petroglyph Nat'l Monument

An either/or type of adventure: there will either be an informative hike into the Canyon Rinconada area of Petroglyph Park, or there will be a cleanup of a designated area of the park. The option to be exercised will be determined in April. Please call the leader for additional details.

Leader: Ike Eastvold 255-7679

Sat 26 Apr Moderate
Miles: 5-6 Car: 160

Hike - La Lena Wilderness Study Area

Sandstone questas and interesting rock formations characterize this WSA which is adjacent to Empedrado WSA. San Luis Mesa, the most prominent feature, is known to be a popular nesting site for raptors, such as Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Great Horned Owl, and Red-Tailed Hawks. Call leader for details.

Leader: Tom Petencin 255-1497

WESTERN NEW MEXICO SECTION REPORT

Western New Mexico Folks Meet with Forest Service

by Kathryn Gallagher

Members of the Western New Mexico Section met with Forest Service rangers Mark Catron and Paul Tidwell of the Mount Taylor Ranger District on January 12. Topics of the session included the Zuni Mountains and Mount Taylor and the general management of Cibola National Forest.

Mark Catron stated that the main purpose of the Forest Service is to conserve national resources. One way to accomplish this goal is to utilize land exchanges to concentrate areas of forest service properties. They can occasionally purchase land under the National Conservation Act.

Issues confronting the Mount Taylor Ranger District are lack of funds and shortage of personnel. Sierra Club members voiced their concerns about the following issues:

(1) Proposed major improvements of Routes 49 and 50 in Cibola and McKinley Counties, which would allow dense traffic to move through the forest. This could lead to vandalism of sacred and cultural sites and development of the area as over one-third of the road goes through private property.

(2) Logging of trees resulting in development, erosion, loss of wildlife habitat, and visual impairment of scenery.

(3) Misuse of public lands by over-grazing of cattle.

(4) Lack of recreational sites.

(5) Lack of personnel to supervise and maintain existing campsites.

Mark Catron stated that the primary purpose of opening Route 50 is to absorb the overflow of crowds from the Sandia Mountains. (Author's opinion: Since Route 50 goes through much private land, this could be a problem!) Both rangers were asked if they would welcome volunteer assistance. This was welcomed by both. Activities that could be developed with volunteer help include:

(1) Assist with educational programs involving schools and other groups.

(2) Serve as campground volunteers, and welcome the public at Fort Wingate.

(3) Plant trees and seeds as directed.

(4) Assist with trail repair and markings.

(5) Provide general surveillance of the National Forest.

Logging on private lands was discussed. The rangers said that the Forest Service does not have jurisdiction over private lands. They can interfere only if the logging process has impaired drainage, or damaged adjacent Forest Service lands and roads. Logging on Forest Service lands requires an extensive analysis before permission is given. The actual process involved was not discussed.

The Continental Divide Trail on Mount Taylor near Horace Canyon was discussed. At this time, the trail has not been completed because of unresolved issues with private landowners and Native Americans.

The meeting was concluded with agreement that the Forest Service education representatives would be contacted and volunteer projects set up.

(Author's statement: The Zuni Mountains are diverse, unique, and beautiful. This area is unknown to many hikers. It includes many trails, canyons and outlooks. Hiking ranges from easy to difficult. Our goal is to keep these mountains as pristine as possible. The main campgrounds at McGaffey, Lobo Canyon, Coal Mine and Ojo Redondo are heavily used and sometimes misused. Local volunteers are needed to assist the Forest Service in maintaining this area. Sierra Club members are encouraged to watch the newsletter for activities in this area.)

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Donna Nemes or Mark Catron, Mount Taylor Ranger District, 1800 Lobo Canyon Road, Grants, N.M. 87020, (505) 287-8833.

Publication: *El Malpais, Mount Taylor and the Zuni Mountains, A Hiking Guide and History*, by Sherry Robinson is available at local bookstores.

If you are interested in being involved in planning outings or issue activities for the Western New Mexico Section, call Barbara Brandt at 488-5233 or Barbara Leonard at 862-7915.

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323-7207

Chapter ExCom to Meet in El Paso

The Executive Committee of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club will meet in El Paso on Saturday, March 1 and Sunday, March 2. You are cordially invited to attend these meetings and to join members of the Executive Committee for a Saturday evening social/dinner. The times and locations will be announced at the El Paso group's general meeting on Wednesday, February 26.

Executive Committee

The ExCom will meet on March 5, at 7 PM, at the Environmental Center, 800 South Piedras, El Paso. Its usual meeting is on the first Wednesday of the month at the El Paso Rehabilitation Center, 1101 East Schuster in El Paso. Call Wesley Leonard for more details: 747-6649 (W).

Conservation Committee

The Conservation Committee will have its regular meeting on March 12, at 7 PM, at the Environmental Center, 800 South Piedras, El Paso. Call Wesley Leonard for more details: 747-6649 (W).

El Paso Environmental Center

by John Sproul

The El Paso Environmental Center, six years old, is serving more and more as a focal point for citizen environmental action in El Paso. Groups using the Center in recent months have included the Border Environmental Network, Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue, El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society, Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition, Friends of Hueco Tanks, Habitat for Humanity, Rio Bravo River Watchers, Rio Grande/Rio Bravo Basin Coalition, and Sierra Club.

The Center's continued operation has depended on a small group of dedicated volunteers. Sincere thanks go to the folks who have helped in recent months: Berttye Barnhart, Erika Episcopo, Jane Fowler, Hugh Jameson, Barbara Mertig, Jo Nagel, Barbara Nehring, Betty Pagel, Mike Seidensticker, John Sproul, Daniel Valdez and Vic Ward.

The popularity of the Center's recycling program has surged recently. It needs a similar surge in volunteers to keep up with the expanded workload. Also, the Center operates without the benefit of a recycling coordinator, a volunteer coordinator, a grounds keeper, or a director. The director position has been vacant almost 4 years now. Call me at 532-9645 or stop by the Center if you wish to help in any way.

The Environmental Center is located at 800 South Piedras at Paisano in El Paso. It is open Wednesday through Saturday from 9 AM to 2 PM.

Outings

Mar 8-9: Baylor Pass Service Trip

Place: Organ Mountains, near Las Cruces

Class: Easy

Limit: None. Reservations and leader approval.

Leader: Alice Anderson: (505) 523-5179

Here is your chance to give something back to the wild lands we all love. The BLM asked us to obliterate a wildcat trail in the Organ Mountains WSA. The BLM will provide tools, but please bring a shovel if you have one. Wear work gloves. You may sign up for Saturday, Sunday, or both.

Mar 15: Bishop's Cap Dayhike

Place: Southern End of Organ Mountains

Class: Moderate

Limit: 12

Leader: Carol Morrison: 545-1632 (H), 779-8151 (W)

Enjoy a Saturday hike with other new and old (and prospective?) Sierrans while exploring another close-by nook between the Franklins and the Organs. We'll be out by mid-afternoon, in time for your other Saturday activities. Join us!

Mar 15-16: Alamo Mountain Backpack

Place: A few miles east of El Paso

Class: Easy

Limit: 12, with reservations and approval

Leader: Laurence Gibson: 597-7342

We leave El Paso Saturday after lunch for the short drive to this flat-topped cinder cone. We make our own trail to the top, where we will set up camp and explore--perhaps finding Bill Phillips' tent poles or a rattler! Our return should be about midday Sunday.

Mar 22-24: Chiracahua Crest Trail Key-Exchange Backpack

Place: Chiracahua Wilderness, S.E. Arizona

Class: Moderate+

Limit: 20 (10 in each group). Reservations and leader approval required.

Leader: Claus Christiansen: 532-4066 (H), 594-2505 (W);

Rollin Wickenden: 534-6594

Come enjoy the budding wildflowers of the Chiracahuas! We will depart from El Paso early Saturday morning. Claus's group will start hiking at Rustler's Park heading south on the Crest Trail (270) to Rocker Canyon via

GROUP DIRECTORY

Executive Committee

Chairman	Wesley Leonard	747-6649	cleonard@utep.edu
Vice Chair	Jim Bell	581-8864	
Treasurer	Kathy Sunday	584-9301	sunday@pogo.den.mmc.com
Member	Laurence Gibson	594-7342	gibson@ece.utep.edu
Member	Ted Mertig	852-3011	tmertig@aol.com
Member	Bill Phillips	772-6503	
Member	Gary Williams	593-3524	

Administration

Chapter Rep.	Elizabeth Walsh	584-1471	ewalsh@utep.edu
LORAX	Sally Savage	833-6899	
	Pat Dugger	581-3264	
Secretary	Mike Seidensticker	544-5741	76251.2520@compuserve.com

Project Chairs

BLM Wilderness	Joe Rodriguez	833-9655	
Enviro. Center & Franklin Mountains	John Sproul	545-5157	ae494@rgfn.epcc.edu
Grazing & Timber	Liz Walsh	584-1471	ewalsh@utep.edu
Membership	Bill Phillips	772-6503	
Outings	Laurence Gibson	594-7342	gibson@ece.utep.edu
Political Action	Jim Bell	581-8864	
Programs	Gary Williams	593-3524	
Project ACT	Ann Falknor	833-9162	
	E. Anthony Martinez	747-7489	emanuel@mail.utep.edu
	Richard Rheder	544-5659	af303@rgfn.epcc.edu
	Liz Walsh	584-1471	ewalsh@utep.edu
	Gary Williams	593-3524	
Publicity	Ted Mertig	852-3011	tmertig@aol.com
Sierra Blanca	E. Anthony Martinez	747-7489	emanuel@mail.utep.edu

Sierra Club Environmental Center

800 S. Piedras @ Paisano
532-9645, 532-4876 fax

LORAX information:

Pat Dugger
236 Fremont Lane
El Paso, TX 79912-5352

Monte Vista Peak. Rollin will lead the northbound group starting in Rocker Canyon. Two nights will be spent in the backcountry near dependable water sources. The northbound group is the uphill group, gaining 2500' of elevation the first day. Trail distance for each group is about 14 miles.

Mar 28-30: Easter Weekend Backpack and Car Camp

Place: Guadalupe Mountain National Park

Class: Moderate

Limit: 12. Reservations required.

Leader: Laurence Gibson: 597-7342

We leave El Paso Friday morning, dropping vehicles at Pine Springs on our way to Dog Canyon. There will be at least one night in a backcountry campsite. If we can arrange a supply of water in the backcountry, we could stay in two nights. If the group is large enough, we will arrange a key exchange.

Apr 5: Feather Lake Afternoon Stroll

Place: Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, El Paso

Class: Easy

Limit: 30

Leader: John Sproul: 545-5157 (H)

One of the most spectacular wildlife displays El Paso has to offer takes place in spring at Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary. Each afternoon, starting about an hour before sunset, thousands of migrating White-faced Ibis return to Feather Lake to roost for the evening. They arrive in groups of 50 to 400, and continue coming in until 30 minutes after sunset. Last year, numbers peaked at approximately 6,000 ibises. And when was that peak? The first Saturday in April. This trip will be an easy one-mile stroll around Feather Lake, starting at 6 PM. We'll watch the ibises come in and enjoy the other wildlife.

Apr 12: Willi White Canyon Dayhike

Place: Sacramento Mountains SE of Cloudcroft, NM

Class: Easy

Limit: 12

Leader: Ann Faulkner: 833-9162

Apr 12-13: East Canyon Car Camp and Dayhike

Place: Gila National Forest

Class: Easy

Limit: 12

Leader: Ted Mertig: 852-3011

Apr 19: Rim Trail Dayhike

Place: Lincoln National Forest, Cloudcroft, NM

Class: Moderate to strenuous

Limit: 12. Reservations and leader approval required.

Leader: Jim Bell: 581-8864

We will hike 14 miles of the Rim Trail located outside Cloudcroft, NM. Although there is not a great deal of elevation gain or loss, the length and elevation (about 8,500 feet) make this a moderate to strenuous outing.



Apr 26-27: Railroad/Gallenas Canyon Backpack
 Place: Black Range West of Hillsboro, NM
 Class: Moderate
 Limit: 12
 Leader: Rollin Wickenden: 534-6594

May 3-4: San Mateos Mountains Backpack
 Place: San Mateos Mountains, South of Socorro, NM
 Class: Moderate
 Limit: 12
 Leader: Joe Rodriguez: 833-9655

May 4: Hillsboro Peak Dayhike
 Place: Black Range
 Class: Moderate
 Limit: 12
 Leader: Carolina Greenfield: 594-7342

May 10: Indian Hollow Issue Outing
Joint Outing with Southern New Mexico Group
 Place: East Side of Organ Mountains
 Class: Moderate
 Limit: 12
 Leader: Alice Anderson: (505) 523-5179
 For details, see Southern New Mexico Group News, page 14.

May 24-26: Memorial Day Three-Day Backpack
 Place: Mineral Creek, Gila National Forest
 Class: Moderate to Easy
 Limit: 12. Reservations and leader approval required.
 Leader: Laurence Gibson: 594-7342

Jun 7-15: Annual Trans-Gila Backpack
 Place: Gila Wilderness
 Class: Moderate+
 Limit: 12. Previous multi-day experience.
 Leader: Laurence Gibson: 594-7342

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 945, Los Alamos, NM 87544

Chair	Michael Smith	662-2380
Vice-Chair	Walt Matuska	662-9212
Secretary	Stephany Bouchier	662-6867
Treasurer	Guthrie Miller	662-5545
	Barbara Calef	662-3825
	Steve Koch	662-9423
	Warren Lieb	662-7966

PERMANENT COMMITTEES

Several Committees have been identified and a few interim Chairs have volunteered.

All the committees need volunteers! The Committees and their Chairs are:

Conservation	Steve Koch	662-9423
Environmental Education	Janet Gerwin	662-9568
Membership	Terry Phillips	662-4838
Newsletter	Edwina Lieb	662-4013
Outings	Tinka Gammel	662-4856
Phone Tree	Lonna Evans	662-2621
Political	Michael Smith	662-2380
Publicity	Janet Gerwin	662-9568

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE NEWS

The Conservation Committee has identified 7 issues. They, with the member responsible for each, are:

Community Planning	Michael Smith	662-2380
Mining	Abe Jacobson	662-9579
Forest	Steve Koch	662-9423
Bandelier	Sue Barns	662-9423
Water		
Grazing		
Wildlife		

UPCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. at Mesa Public Library, upstairs.

March General Meeting:

On Wednesday, March 5, Jim Baca, former State Land Commissioner, and John Wright, of the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition, will speak on The Politics of Land Management.

April General Meeting:

On Wednesday, April 2, Steve Fettig will speak on the elk population at Bandelier.

May General Meeting:

Wednesday, May 7. Courtney White, archaeologist and Sierra Club activist will speak about a new cooperative program with the Forest Service which is designed to preserve our area's endangered cultural resources. Talk includes

a slide show on local archaeological sites.

The Conservation Committee meets on the second Wednesday of each month, and the Executive Committee on the third Wednesday; both meetings are open to all and you are encouraged to attend.

Equinoctial Pot Luck

Volunteers are needed to help organize the first of what we hope will be a Pajarito Group tradition, Equinoctial and Solstitial Pot Lucks! Plan to join us on Friday, March 21, at Fuller Lodge, from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. Mark your calendars, open your cookbooks, and come meet other Pajarito Group members. Call Guthrie Miller if you would like to help.

Outings

Tinka Gammel and Terry Phillips are looking for members interested in leading outings in our area. Please call either one of them if you are interested.

Earth Day

We hope to have a Pajarito Group booth set up downtown during the annual Earth Day celebration. If you would like to help, please call one of the Executive Committee members.

Training Session for Archaeological Site Stewards

will be held in Garcia Canyon on Sunday, May 11. For more information, call Courtney White at 982-5502, and plan to come to the May General Meeting.

For further information on the Pajarito Group, and how to get involved contact Janet Gerwin (662-9568) or Michael Smith (662-2380).

The Sierra Club's Statement of Purpose is: To explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.

As a grassroots-based organization, we rely on individuals for our resources, talent, and energy. Our members are our most important assets. Join the Sierra Club today.

Yes, I want to join! I want to help safeguard our children's precious natural heritage. My payment is enclosed.

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Check enclosed Phone (Optional) () _____

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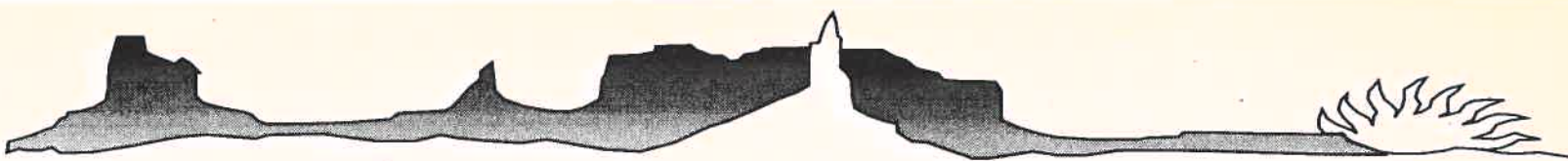
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Contributions, gifts or dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

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SANTA FE GROUP MEETINGS

Santa Fe Group News

NO-LOGGING DEBATE !!

Tuesday, March 18, 7 PM

Chad Hanson, Chair of the National Sierra Club's No-Logging Task Force, will debate **Bill DeBuys**, conservationist and author of *Enchantment and Exploitation* and *River of Traps*, on the merits of the Sierra Club's new national policy banning all commercial logging on public land.

This will be a lively and educational meeting for all. Bring your questions! For more information, call Courtney White, 982-5502.

All meetings, outings, and activities are **FREE** and open to the public.



The Membership Meetings will be held at the Unitarian Church at 107 W. Barcelona Street (between Galisteo and Don Gaspar).

ADOPT - A - RUIN

Help Wanted

Tuesday, April 15, 7 PM

The Santa Fe National Forest and the Sierra Club are looking for a FEW GOOD VOLUNTEERS to act as site stewards on archaeological ruins. **Mike Bremer**, supervisory archaeologist for the Santa Fe NF, will discuss a brand new cooperative program to help protect our valuable (and vanishing) cultural resources.

Volunteers are needed to visit an archaeological site on a regular basis and write a brief report to the Forest Service. *It's critically important work — and it's outdoors where you'd want to me anyway!* The talk includes a slide show on the area's prehistoric ruins.

How to Adopt - A - Ruin

A free, in-field training session for archaeological site stewards will be held in Garcia Canyon on Sunday, May 11, 1997. The training will be led by Mike Bremer, supervisory archeologist for the Santa Fe National Forest, and assisted by Courtney White and Gen Head. Come learn more about prehistoric sites and how to help them! For more information, call Courtney at 982-5502.

Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club

621 Old Santa Fe Trail · Suite 10 · Plaza Desira · Santa Fe · New Mexico · 87501
505 · 983-2703

Group Comments on City, County General Plans

by Barbara H. Johnson, Sustainability Issues Chair

The Santa Fe Group has commented on both the Santa Fe City and County Draft General Plans. As we told them, there are some good things in both plans:

"... There are a number of things in the [County] Draft General Plan which we support, including:

"1. Open Space Ratios (90:10 and 70:30). 2. Clustering Development to minimize infrastructure costs. 3. The idea of preserving the Rural Character of the County. 4. Eliminating the Density Bonus for water conservation. 5. Imposing water conservation measures for all development. 6. Community Planning to determine land use."

"We wish to express some of our concerns with the City's Draft General Plan. We understand that much of what is included is an attempt to manage growth to avoid the damage caused by the "sprawl" so evident in other Western cities, like Albuquerque. The concept of infill, placing new development closer in to the urban core of the City to minimize infrastructure and service costs, is an excellent one. We are impressed with the environmental mapping which has been done. We agree that future building permits allowing individual wells and septic tanks should be limited (if not banned outright)."

But both plans are blueprints for rapid growth in an area that may not be able to support it. In particular, we expressed our concerns over the reliance by both the City and County on imported water to allow this growth. (The County is planning for a population of 156,140 by 2020 and the City a population of over 117,000 by the same year. Current County population is around 110,000; current City population is approximately 60,000.) As we told them:

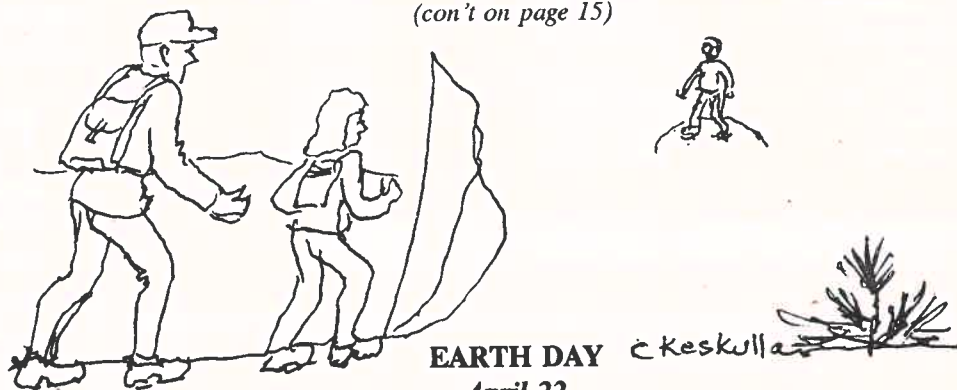
"Water

"As the January 11, 1996, Report said on this topic: 'Relying on

future water acquisitions is risky when approving new development. "The expectation of acquiring additional San Juan-Chama water has driven much past planning, but prospects for such acquisitions, while they exist, have grown increasingly complex," [Thaw Report 1995] . . ." (Summary, Page 8, emphasis added.)

"Despite this, the Plan's water goal [is] to 'Promote measures to increase the supply of available surface water . . .' (Page 8-1)

"The Plan further states that: 'The city's 1995 water-rights ownership (con't on page 15)



EARTH DAY
April 22

The Santa Fe Group and Wild Oats Market are jointly sponsoring Earth Day this year. We will be setting up shop inside the Wild Oats St. Francis store for four days, April 19-22, and we need volunteers to sit at tables. On Saturday, April 19, there will be a children's Earth Circus. On Tuesday, Earth Day itself, the Group will be giving away free trees and receiving Wild Oat's Five Percent Day (5% of all profits go to the Sierra Club). There will be a musical concert that evening. More details will be forthcoming. For more information, call Courtney White at 982-5502.

◆ ◆ SANTA FE GROUP OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS ◆ ◆

Chair — John Buchser * 820-0201
Vice-Chair — Doug Fraser 474-7615
Secretary/Treas — Lionel Soracco* 983-6715
Answering Machine — L. Soracco* 983-6715
Chapter Representative — TBD
Conservation — Courtney White* 982-5502
Newsletter Editor — Kay Carlson 982-3926
Publicity — Kay Carlson 982-3926
Outings — Norbert Sperlich 983-1962
— Norma McCallan* 471-0005
Political Committee — Ned Sudborough 474-4055
Phone Tree — Norma McCallan* 471-0005

Membership — Ned Sudborough 474-4055
Fundraising — Education } open
Office — Welcomer } positions

Don Goldman * 473-2821
Jeff Regenold * 661-6707

* Member of the SF Group Executive Committee

Terms expire

12/97: Buchser/Goldman/McCallan/Soracco
12/98: Fraser/Johnson/Regenold/Sudborough

CAROLYN KESKULLA HOLDS ART SHOW

Carolyn, long-time Sierra activist and hike leader (with her husband Arnold), is having an art show at the Main Santa Fe Public Library on Washington Avenue during the month of March. Come view her delightful watercolors, etchings and woodcuts.

Conservation Committee meets:

Tuesday, March 25 and Tuesday, April 29

Group Executive Committee meets:

Tuesday, April 1 and Tuesday, May 6

SANTA FE GROUP OUTINGS

Sat Sun March

- 1 Ned Sudborough (474-4055) Moderate Hike. If there is a good, recent snow, this will be changed to a cross-country ski trip. Call for details.
- 2 Matt Gervaise (466-3497) Moderate Cross-Country Ski Trip. Call for time, meeting place and destination.
- Saturday, March 7, through Sunday, March 16 **DATE CHANGE !!**
John Buchser (820-0201) Moderate/Strenuous Backpack to the Superstition Mountains in Arizona. Call for reservations/details. Leave noon on Friday 3-6.
- 8 Bob McKee (672-3426) Moderate Hike in the White Rock area. Call for time and meeting place.
- 9 Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) Moderate/Strenuous Hike to Cerro Rito and the Blowhole in the Caja. Off-trail walking. Call leader if not familiar with hike. Leave 8 AM.
- 15 Carolyn and Arnold Keskulla (982-9570) Easy Hike to Tent Rocks. Call for time and meeting place.
- 16 Victor Atyas (438-9434) Easy Hike in the Cerrillos Hills. Meet at Villa Linda Mall in front of Walgreens at 9 AM.
- 22 Steven Janus (988-4137) Moderate/Strenuous Snowshoe Trip northwest ridge to Lake Peak, return via Raven's Ridge. Leave 8 AM.
- 22 Sherry Evans (473-9632) Moderate Hike to Ancho Rapids. Leave 9 AM.
- 22 Tom Petencin (1-505-255-1497) Moderate Hike to Empredado Wilderness Study Area (WSA) west of Cabezón. Explore an interesting landscape carved from cretaceous sandstone and shale, with fossil and archaeological sites scattered about. Call for time and meeting place. For carpooling from Santa Fe, call Norma 471-0005.
- 23 Lee Sullivan (662-6185) Moderate Hike near Santa Cruz Lake, 7 miles RT. Meet 9 AM at Sierra office in Santa Fe to carpool, or meet leader at 9:30 AM in Pojoaque at the Cities of Gold Casino parking lot.

Sat Sun April

- Thursday, April 3 to Sunday, April 6 Norma McCallan (471-0005) Exploratory car camp/moderate day hikes in SE Utah canyon country, perhaps Book Cliffs WSA. Dogs OK. Leave Wed PM. Call for information/reservations.
- 5 Carolyn and Arnold Keskulla (982-9570) Easy Hike in Tesuque Hills, some uphill. Leave 9 AM.
- 5 Lionel Soracco (983-6715) Moderate/Strenuous X-country ski trip Leave 8 AM. Call leader for destination.
- 6 Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) Moderate/Strenuous Hike Chino Mesa and edge of White Rock Canyon. Some rough terrain. Call leader if not familiar Leave 8 AM.
- 12 John Buchser (820-0201) Atalaya Trail Maintenance Meet 8:30 at St. Johns parking lot. Bring work gloves, lunch and water.
- 12 Caroline Glick (984-3184) Strenuous Loop Hike Diablo Canyon-Rio Grande-Buckman Mesa. 13 miles total. 1050' up. Dogs allowed. Call leader for reservation.
- 13 Victor Atyas (438-9434) Easy Hike Frey Trail-Frijoles Canyon-Ceremonial Cave. 500' climb. Leave 9 AM.
- 19 Stephen Janus (988-4137) Strenuous Mountaineering Adventure Call leader for information.
- 20 Martha Anne Freeman (438-0697) ISSUE FIELD TRIP upper Pecos Rvr, designated as a Wild and Scenic River, to learn about long-term management, protection and enhancement of this corridor. Recreation and riparian and aquatic ecosystem will be some issues considered under the direction of Bill Britten, FS recreation and wilderness staff officer. Call for reservations and meeting place. Limited to 10 participants. Leave at 9 AM.
- Friday, April 25, to Friday, May 2
Courtney White (982-5502) Activist exploratory car camp w/ Moderate Day Hikes Grand Staircase/Canyons of Escalante NM. Check our newest nat'l monument! Leave Fri, 1 PM, drive via overnite camp near Natural Bridges, NM, across Burr Trail. Spend 1-2 days hiking the canyons which go through the Circle Cliffs into the Escalante Rvr, resupply in town of Escalante, onto the Kaiparowits Plateau and down Smoky Mtn. dirt road, day hike some of its many canyons and ridges. Out by Friday AM and back to Santa Fe. Dogs allowed. Call for reservations. High clearance or 4x4 vehicles required.

March 1997 continued

- 29 Norma McCallan (471-0005) Moderate Hike on DOE lands between White Rock and Bandelier. Dogs allowed. Meet in Santa Fe at 8 AM or at White Rock Shell Station at 9 AM. (Note, this is the hike listed for December 22, 1996, that was canceled.)
- 30 Jeff Regenold (661-6707) Easy/Moderate Hike to the remote plateau of Boco del Oso, a WSA near Cabezón. A lot of wildlife, such as elk, and great views! Call for time and meeting place.

Outings Notes— Unless otherwise noted, all outings leave from the Sierra office, 621 Old Santa Fe Trail, "Plaza Desira," just south of Old SF Trail Bookstore & Coffee House. Carpooling will be arranged. Each hiker should come prepared to pay 5¢ a mile to the driver of the car in which s/he rides. Bring a lunch, water, sturdy hiking boots or shoes, and clothing suitable for the weather - leader reserves the right to turn away anyone whose equipment or experience appears unsuitable. Leader has right to alter destination of hike or cancel trip due to weather, unfavorable conditions, or insufficient numbers of participants. Unaccompanied minors must have written permission from parents or guardians to participate; permission forms are available at the Sierra Club office. Dogs not permitted on hikes unless noted otherwise. Telephone leader for details of the individual hike.

Sat Sun May

- 3 Lionel Soracco (983-6715) Moderate/Strenuous X-country Ski Trip (snow conditions permitting). Leave 8 AM.
- 3 Jeff Regenold (661-6707) Easy/Moderate Hike in the Sierra Ladrones Mountains. Explore new terrain in this remote WSA southwest of Belen. Call for time and meeting place. (originally scheduled Feb. 9)
- 4 Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) Strenuous Hike to Shaggy Peak/ Deer Creek. All off-trail. Call if not familiar w/hike. Lve 8 AM.
- 10 Carolyn and Arnold Keskulla (982-9570) Easy Hike up Penstemon Ridge. Some elevation gain. Leave 9 AM.
- 10 Bob McKee (672-3426) Strenuous, Exploratory Hike to the top of Cerro Colorado, near Ojo Caliente. 1500' elevation gain, off trail. Optional soak in hot springs afterwards. Call for time/meeting place.
- 11 Courtney White (982-5502) Kick off for Adopt-a-Ruin — Field Trip to Garcia Canyon w/Mike Bremer, supervisory archeologist for the SFNF. For six stewards and anyone else interested in better understanding prehistoric sites. Call for details.
- 17 Carolyn Glick (984-3184) Strenuous Hike to Glorieta Baldy, and perhaps on to Thompson Peak. Dogs allowed. Call for time.
- Friday, May 16 to Monday, May 26
Norma McCallan (471-0005) 10-day exploratory trip into the Grand Staircase/Canyons of the Escalante Nat'l monument. One or two Canyon backpacks, plus carcamping/day hikes on the Kaiparowits. High clearance vehicles required. Lve Thurs afternoon, 5-15. Call for information.
- 18 Art Judd (982-3212) Moderate Hike in high country. Lve 8 AM.
- 24 Steven Janus (988-4137) Strenuous Hike Sheephead Peak via San Leonardo Lake. May still be snow. Leave 7 AM.
- 31 Martha Anne Freeman (438-0697) Field Trip to the sites of the Bench and Dome Fires. What does time do? Matt Reidy, forester in Jemez Ranger District, will lead the Group. Witness the procession of regeneration in a natural and a proscribed burn. Should be profusion of wildflowers and birds. Call for reservations at least three days ahead. Max 30 people.
- 31 Jeff Jones (466-2389) Easy/Moderate Hike to the Ghost Hotel. Children encouraged. 6½ mile RT. Meet leader at 2nd entrance (Vista Grande) to Eldorado off Hwy 285 at 9 AM.

April 1997 (continued)

- 26 Tom Petencin (1-505-255-1497) Moderate Hike to La Lena WSA. Sandstone cuestas and interesting rock formations characterize this WSA, adjacent to Empredado. San Luis Mesa, its most prominent feature, is known as a popular nesting site for raptors, such as the golden eagle, prairie falcon and great horned owl. Great views. Call for time/meeting place.
- 26 Peter Otto (986-5840) Moderate/Strenuous Hike in Pecos, trail conditions permitting. Call leader for info.
- 27 Jeff Jones (466-2389) Easy/Moderate Hike to cave dwellings near Otowi Ruins. Some scrambling. Kids welcome. Leave 8:30 AM.

GROUP DIRECTORY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 3705 UPB
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88011

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A WORD FROM THE CHAIR, Wayne Suggs, Jr.: NEW MEXICO COUGARS NEED SIERRA CLUB

In May, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish will come to a final decision on how cougars will be managed in the coming years. Will the cougars continue to be managed poorly as they are now, based on politics and personal agendas, or can we move ahead and do what's best for the cougar through scientific management? At a recent meeting held by G&F, the Hornocker Institute gave a presentation on the 10 year study that had been conducted on cougars. The large room was packed, standing room only. The room was filled with ranchers, houndsmen, and less than a half dozen people from the environmental community. If the Sierra Club's voice is to be heard, we must speak out now. We must let G&F know that we approve of the Hornocker Institute Management Plan. Presently, the hunting season is open December 1st through March 31st with no limit on the number of hunting licenses issued. In the proposed management plan, a quota system would be implemented, to ensure that a healthy breeding population remains intact. Also, they recommend a northern and southern New Mexico lion refuge of at least 1000 square miles each, where lions are not hunted or controlled.

I believe the Sierra Club should also endorse:

1. A male only hunt.
2. An end to the harrassment by houndsmen training their dogs on female cougars and their cubs. (A good houndsmen can tell the difference between a male and female track.)
3. An end to road hunting. (The practice of driving roads, looking for fresh cougar tracks, then releasing the hounds.)
4. Stop the use of radio telemetry on hunting dogs. (This would make for a more honest hunt.)
5. Preventative depredation must stop. (The taking of cougars simply because their habitat is shared with livestock, where they are perceived as a threat.)
6. Stopping the encroachment of subdivisions and industry into cougar habitat. It is of the utmost importance to keep BLM, State and National Forest Lands intact and not let these lands be privatized, to insure that natural corridors remain open and the cougars' habitat remains wild.

Please let G&F know how you feel. Write them at:

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Division of Wildlife
Survey Section
P.O. Box 25112
Santa Fe, NM 87504-9944

We have another chance to see a fine presentation by Kenneth Logan of the Hornocker Institute. It entails a 40 minute slide show, in-depth details of the extensive 10 year study, and the answers to any questions you may have. It will be held on March 11, at 7:00 p.m. at the Southwest Environmental Center in Las Cruces. For more information, please feel free to contact me.

Friends of the Mexican Wolf

Please call Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior at (202)208-7351, fax: (202)208-6956

As of this writing, Secretary Babbitt has yet to sign off on the final EIS for Mexican Wolf Reintroduction. Let him know that you are in favor of releasing the Mexican Wolf into the Blue Range and Gila Wilderness. It is also important to state that, if a wolf is not depredating livestock, he should be allowed to roam his full and former range instead of being constrained by unnecessary boundaries.

OUTINGS

March 22 - Dog Canyon Dayhike

Place: Sacramento Mountains

Class: Strenuous

Limit: 12, Reservations and leader approval required

Leader: Larry Hughes (w)522-4600 ext 270, email: larry@tcisoft.com, and Lolina Alvarez (h)521-1152.

Starting from Oliver Lee State Park (about 15 miles south of Alamogordo off 54), we will hike up Dog Canyon to the ruins of an old line cabin. Then we will hike up and out of the canyon, to great views of the Tularosa Basin. Bring extra clothing, food and plenty of water. We will meet at 7:00 a.m. in the north parking lot of the Pan American Center.

April 12 - Organ Peak Dayhike

Place: Organ Mountains

Class: Strenuous

Limit: 12, Reservations and leader approval required

Leader: Larry Hughes (w)522-4600 ext 270, email: larry@tcisoft.com, and Lolina Alvarez (h)521-1152.

Starting from Dripping Springs, we hike up Fillmore Canyon for 3 or 4 miles, then we leave the canyon and hike up to Organ Peak. Bring extra clothing, food, and plenty of water. We will meet at 7:30 a.m. in the north parking lot of the Pan American Center.

April 26 - 27 Animas Creek overnight car camp

Joint Trip with Warm Springs Section and Southern New Mexico Group

Place: Animas Creek, Black Range

Limit: None, Reservations and Leader approval required.

Leader: Margot Wilson 744-5860 work: 894-7152

Join the Forest Service's Jerry Payne for an outing to the upper reaches of Animas Creek. We will proceed through the Ladder Ranch and get a rare chance to see some spectacular scenery. We will discuss and witness one of the most inaccessible and beautiful canyons in the Aldo Leopold Wilderness. We will leave the Forest Service office located in Truth or Consequences at 8:00 a.m. sharp. Please call for further details.

April 26 - Hillsboro Peak Dayhike

Place: Black Range

Class: Moderate

Limit: 12, Reservations and leader approval required

Leader: Larry Hughes (w)522-4600 ext 270, email: larry@tcisoft.com, and Lolina Alvarez (h)521-1152.

Starting from Emory Pass (about 20 miles west of Hillsboro on 152) we will hike up to Hillsboro Peak. About 10 miles round trip with 1800 ft elevation gain. Bring extra clothing, food, and plenty of water. We will meet at 7:30 a.m. in the north parking lot of the Pan American Center.

May 10 - Indian Hollow Issue Outing

Joint trip with El Paso Group

Place: Organ Mountains, NM

Class: Easy

Limit: None, Reservations and leader approval required

Leader: Alice Anderson 523-5179.

Indian Hollow is being devastated by unauthorized amateur trail builders. This trip will be to survey the damage and to discuss what to do. If you care about wild places, please come. We start at Aguirre Springs campground which has a \$3.00 entry fee.

GENERAL MEETINGS

NEW MEXICO COUGARS

March 11, 1997 - 7:00 p.m. at the Southwest Environmental Center, Kenneth Logan of the Hornocker Institute will give an indepth presentation on the extensive 10 year study of New Mexico cougars. It entails a 40 minute slide show and he'll answer any questions you may have. This is a chance for you to get involved as this important study will affect the way cougars will be managed in the future.

BRINGING BACK THE RIVER

April 17th - 7:00 p.m. at the Southwest Environmental Center, Kevin Bixby of the Southwest Environmental Center will present a slide show entitled: "Bringing Back the River." It takes a look at the ecological demise of the Rio Grande and the prospects for restoring it. He'll also be discussing El Paso's pipeline proposal along with IBWC's scorch and burn management of the riparian areas along the river. He'll discuss other threats and opportunities for the Rio Grande River.

Warm Springs Section Report

The Mining and Minerals Division of the N.M. State Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, held a public hearing in Truth or Consequences February 7-10, concerning Alta Gold Co.'s proposed Copper Flat Mine reopening near Hillsboro. The New Mexico Environmental Law Center, representing the Ladder Ranch, and the Percha Animas Watershed Association, a Sierra County group, brought up serious concerns about the accuracy and adequacy of data about environmental effects to the local area from the open pit, the tailings pile and the production water wellfield. The pit and pile adjoin the Ladder Ranch, and the production wellfield lies 1/2 mile south of the Animas Creek Arizona Sycamore forest, a favorite birding area. The written comment period is open till March 22, 1997.

Comments should be sent to:
Dr. Kathleen Garland, Director
Mining and Minerals Division, EMNRD
2040 S. Pacheco St.
Santa Fe, N.M. 87505
For more information call Bill Bussmann at 743-3841.

Santa Fe Group News

City, County General Plans

(con't from page 12)

of approximately 20,000 acre-feet and the current methods of utilizing these rights is adequate for the projected average annual growth for the short-term only (three to five years). Additional watersupplies and resource optimization measures will be necessary to meet even the minimum growth rate anticipated. . . (Page 8-12; emphasis added.)

"... It seems unclear why the City wishes to plan for a possible population of 117,000 when it cannot even reliably supply water to the development already approved.

"We understand that the City and the County hope to collaborate on a Water System that relies heavily on imported water. As we have already told the County, there are problems with importing water.

"First. It presupposes that there will be water to import. The City may buy water rights today, but it cannot guarantee that there will be water to import when it is needed. All areas in the West have been overdeveloped in recent years relative to the water available in their aquifers. All Western states will be trying to take the same water sources. . . We know that Jim Corbin, General Manager of the Santa Fe County Water System, has been quoted as saying that, 'There is enough water. The question is, do we want to go get it or not?' (The Santa Fe Reporter, October 25-31, 1995, page 16) We understand that this statement was made before the drought but, in any event, it is extremely optimistic and possibly misleading. As the litigation with Texas over failure to release enough water to that state points out, Rio Grande River water may already be overallocated. To rely on importing water tomorrow for development today is shortsighted.

"Second. Even if the City buys water rights today, getting the water here will take some time (possibly 7-10 years), and a lot of money. The cost for the Santa Fe County Water System is currently estimated at over \$32 million. In addition, the water will not arrive tomorrow. Development should not proceed in advance of water availability, which is what is going on now. . .

"Third. Importing water has consequences in the areas where the water comes from. Lowering water tables or river levels will impact other communities and will impact a variety of ecosystems, riparian areas, fish, and wildlife which depend on that water. The County has rights to water from the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District.

When water was diverted last summer from the river in that area, it nearly exterminated the endangered Silvery Minnow. It is naive to suggest that importing water from the Rio Grande or from San Juan/Chama will not have adverse environmental impacts. . .

"Fourth. The lesson from other places that have imported large amounts of water is that imported water does not recharge the aquifer or supply water to current residents. It drives further development. . ."

In addition, enough development has already been approved in the City and the County to handle projected population increases until 2020. There is no need to approve or encourage further development until we know that we have the water and the infrastructure to support a larger population.

Another large problem with the plans is that they both purport to plan for some of the same areas! The City and County have yet to make good on their promises to meet and iron out the differences between their plans and make them consistent.

We are continuing to follow these issues. If you are interested in getting involved, the Sustainability Issues Team would like to hear from you. Call Barbara Johnson, Sustainability Issues Chair, 466-4935, or Courtney White, Conservation Chair, 982-5502.

an alternative. Regular rail transit is expensive. Dedicated rail arguably safer, are certainly more is the government saying that re important than the lives of its at seems to be the bottom line. ilking here about the Flycatcher larter. We are talking about is, who will, according to the om exposure to radiation from

Visit our homepage on the World Wide Web:

<http://www.nm.org/~sierra/>

You can contact other activists via E-mail by using our List Serve:

sierra@www.nm.org

As the days get longer and the sun brighter, we have a goodly list of activist trips to entice you:

Sat/Sun March 8/9 BAYLOR MOUNTAINS, ORGAN MTNS - Alice Anderson - 505-523-5179. Service trip. Call for details/reservations.

Sat March 22 EMPREDADO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA - Tom Petencin 505-255-1497. Moderate hike to explore the attributes of this little known BLM WSA, west of Cabezón. Should find some interesting landscape carved from Cretaceous sandstone and shale, and if lucky, some archaeological and fossil sites. Call for time/meeting place.

Sat March 30 BOCA DE LOS WSA - Jeff Regenold 505-661-6707. Easy/moderate hike on this high, isolated plateau (near Cabezón Pk) with lots of wildlife, including elk, stands of old ponderosa and great views. Call for time/meeting place.

Sun April 20 - UPPER PECOS RIVER - Martha Ann Freeman 438-0697. Field trip with Forest Service staff to look at long term management issues of riparian and aquatic systems on this designated Wild & Scenic River. Call for reservations/details.

SAT April 26 - LA LENA WSA - Tom Petencin 505-255-1497. Moderate hike. Sandstone cuestas and interesting rock formations characterize this remote WSA, adjacent to Empredado WSA. San Luis Mesa, the most prominent feature is known as a popular nesting site for raptors, such as the golden eagle, prairie falcon and great horned owl. Great views. Call for time/meeting place.

Fri April 25 to Fri May 2 - GRAND STAIRCASE/ESCALANTE CANYONS NATIONAL MONUMENT - Courtney White 505-982-5502. Check out our newest national monument! Exploratory car camp with moderate day hikes across the KAIPAROWITS PLATEAU (on Smoky Mountain Rd) and on several of the canyons north of the Escalante River. Route there will be via the BURR TRAIL. Need high clearance vehicles/dogs allowed. Call for details.

Sat/Sun April 26/27 - ANIMAS RIVER - Margot Wilson 505-744-5860. [postponed from March 15] Overnight field trip with Jerry Payne, USFS to look at riparian and grazing issues along this remarkably lush stream, with huge sycamores & the only live trout on east side of the Black Range. The long dirt road in crosses a part of Ted Turner's Ladder Ranch. Call for details.

Sat May 3 SIERRA LADRONES WSA - Jeff Regenold 505-661-6707. [postponed from Feb 9] Easy/moderate day hike into the rugged "Thieves Mountain" where bandits once hid. Call for time/meeting place.



Chapter Outings Notes from Norma

by Norma McCallan

Sat May 10 INDIAN HOLLOW, ORGAN MTNS - Alice Anderson 505-523-5179. Investigate and discuss remedies to some illegal trail building. Call for details/reservations.

Sun May 11 GARCIA CANYON - ADOPT A RUIN PROGRAM - Courtney White 505-982-5502. Field trip with Mike Bremer, Supervisory Archaeologist for the Santa Fe N.F., assisted by Courtney and Gen Head, will provide training for those interested in adopting a ruin (or simply in better understanding prehistoric sites). Call for details.

Fri May 16 to Mon May 26 - GRAND STAIRCASE/ESCALANTE CANYONS NATIONAL MONUMENT - Norma McCallan 505-471-0005. Exploratory trip #2. Combination of backpacking several canyons and carcamping on KAIPAROWITS PLATEAU. Call for details.

Marian Davidson reports that her Feb 8 ski trip to LAS HUERTAS CANYON had great snow, but the group found a barrier and the road plowed only two miles down from their starting point at Balsam Glade P.G. where they had to pay \$3 to park because everywhere else had no parking signs. Another indication, says Marian, of the Forest Service encouraging long distance travel and discouraging local use.

LIVE! COMING TO NEW MEXICO! THE GULF WAR REVISITED

By Marianne Thaeler, Military Issues
Chair
Rio Grande Chapter

Coming to New Mexico during April 1997! Coming to Otero, Socorro, Lincoln, De Baca, Guadalupe, Quay, Torrance, Harding, Colfax, Union, Dona Ana, and Bernalillo Counties, New Mexico and El Paso, Texas: Roving Sands 97 Joint Training Exercises will replicate probable combat conditions including ground-to-air, air-to-air, and air-to-ground combat scenarios.

According to the "Supplemental Environmental Assessment for Joint Training Exercise, Roving Sands 97," the US Army Forces Command, Headquartered at Fort McPherson, Georgia, will be conducting a multinational military force training exercise called Roving Sands 97 in New Mexico, which will include joint US military service (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine and Guard) units. These exercises will begin April 2, 1997 with deployment of troops, truck convoys, missile launchers, etc., and the "live fly" phase will be April 20-26, 1997, and will include A-6, B-1, B-52, C-130, F-111, F-4, F-14, F-15, F-16, F-18, Tornados and helicopters. German Tornados will fly out of Holloman AFB. A total of 1,730 low level sorties are expected.

Planned in conjunction with Roving Sands 97 is a special, Joint Chiefs of Staff special project, Project Sandstorm, to assess US capabilities to locate and destroy missile systems (e.g., SCUDS) before they are launched.

After the Roving Sands exercises, US Army Fort Bliss will be conducting live fire training on McGregor Range in Otero County, and Dona Ana Range in New Mexico for some of the Roving Sands participants.

The arena will include 118 field sites to be located on White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) and Fort Bliss in New Mexico, AND areas managed by BLM, plus some leased private lands in Socorro County, AND BLM-managed lands of McGregor in Otero County, AND temporary Military Operations Areas

in De Baca, Guadalupe, Quay, Lincoln, Torrance, Harding, Colfax and Union Counties, AND airspace over these Counties including airspace over Dona Ana County abutting the Las Cruces city limits north of Hwy 70, AND private leased lands near the town of Fort Sumner, NM, for Army Special Operations Forces training.

Exercises will be conducted from Fort Bliss, Texas, including Biggs Air Field, WSMR, Roswell Industrial Air Center, Holloman Air Force Base (AFB), Cannon AFB, and Kirtland AFB in New Mexico.

A total of 20,000 troops will be involved, 16,000 at one time, and 6,500 will be located in field locations. The Joint Chiefs of Staff special project, Sandstorm, will disperse approximately 400 personnel around sites in the rural counties. The peak number of personnel deployed at sites on McGregor Range will be approximately 1,800, about 800 of which will be located on Otero Mesa as part of the Air Defense Artillery with Patriot missiles. A contingent of 3,300 will be located at sites on Fort Bliss Dona Ana Range.

The greatest environmental impacts to New Mexico will be from:

- noise from low-flying aircraft,
- dust (particulate matter) and air pollution from truck convoys on dirt roads,
- wild fires that may be started (WSMR does not allow open fires, but Ft. Bliss does but regulates) by accident, or as a result of Ft. Bliss "live fire" exercises being conducted during this period of general drought in southern New Mexico or from the use of flares and other pyrotechnics,
- effects on antelope populations as these exercises are taking place during Otero Mesa calving season,
- effects on bird populations during spring nesting season, and
- water supplies will be impacted particularly in El Paso, Texas from the sheer numbers of troops involved, their hygiene needs

and the washing of vehicles after exercises are over.

And, the numbers of individuals using the lands of New Mexico all during a short period of time will, in and of themselves, have impacts, and there is always a potential for accidents.

All this said, there has been NO input during the planning process for these exercises from the Governor of New Mexico, the State Legislature, or local city or county officials. The Otero County Commission had requested that the Site 10 road to the DOD Only Hunting Area not be upgraded to allow its use by truck convoys, but their request to date has not been recognized. (This is one reason that rural counties are demanding local supremacy.)

Will there be, has there been, environmental damage as a result of previous Roving Sands exercises? Yes. Is Roving Sands 1997 bigger than previous years? Yes, an increase from 10,000 to 20,000 troops. Are there more such exercises planned for the future? Yes. Will tanks be used again, as has been done in previous years? Yes, we have been told tanks will be temporarily located at Fort Bliss within the coming year.

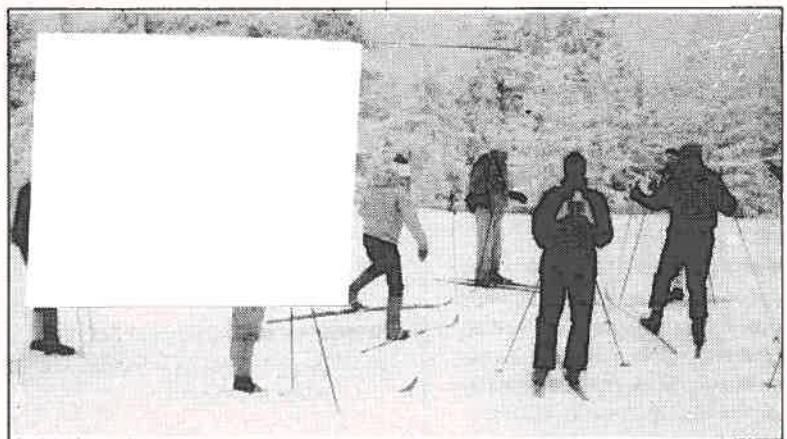
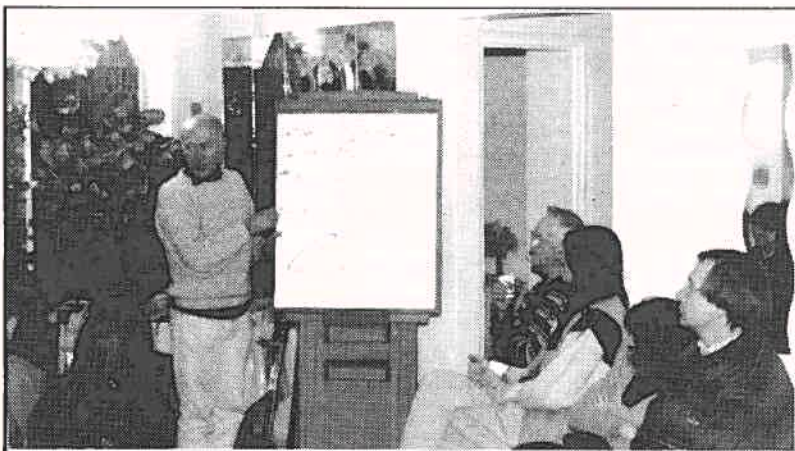
To quote from the Roving Sands 97, Finding of No Significant Impacts, signed February 7, 1997, by James T. Hill, Major General, USA, Deputy Chief of Staff for operations, prior to any public input to the "Supplemental Environmental Assessment": "RS 97 will result in minor impacts to physical biological and cultural resources."

To most New Mexicans 16,000 to 20,000 uninvited guests roaming and flying low around the state does constitute a major environmental impact, when they are all here at once, stay a short time, and then leave. The major economic benefit is to El Paso, Texas, where headquarters, staging and housing are located. Troops will be fed one hot meal and two MRE's delivered by truck convoy each day, or in dining halls at the staging areas.

Ski Report

by Georgia Jannuzzi

A good sized class of newcomers to cross-country skiing attended the indoor ski clinic on January 9th given by John Turnbull of Santa Fe, certified ski instructor. Everything from the history of the sport to the most modern clothing and equipment was discussed. Attendees were able to put their hands on different types of skis, poles and boots and feel different textures in layers of clothing to be worn by the skier, and discover why it was important for these different layers. A discussion on avalanches and safety brought a new awareness to the group. The class seemed eager to learn all they could and the session, which is usually a couple of hours, ran much longer as people got into the swing of things and asked many questions.



An outdoor ski lesson took us to the top of Sandia Peak on Saturday, January 11th on some fresh snow. The lessons and practice sessions were followed by a ski across the top of the peak to The High Finance Restaurant for some food, libations and camaraderie. By the end of the day there was enough confidence that the newcomers were looking forward to trying this fun new sport again. The Albuquerque Group would like to thank John for his excellent presentations at the indoor clinic, and techniques on the snow, allowing so many to be able to get out and enjoy the many marvels of cross-country skiing. We would also like to thank Mike Brown for allowing us to publish his pictures of the classes.

Henry Richmond, of National Growth Management Leadership Project, spoke at the Santa Fe Growth Forum last June 28, on the myths of sprawl. As excerpted from the Conservation Foundation's Common Ground, November/December 1996:

"Myth #1: Reform means interfering with free markets and allowing planners to impose their elitist views on the public. In truth, sprawl is the result of many market-warping policies. Highway construction, mortgage insurance, fragmented property tax systems, favorable tax treatment of homes and sales and mortgage interest, etc., all help shape the 'market.' What's needed is to free the market from the unintended consequences of such policies.

"Myth #2: Property rights advocates say that stopping sprawl means denying people free use of their property. But we've got to look at all property owners. Relatively few will continue to profit from subsidized speculation at the urban fringe. Many more will see taxes rise and property values fall thanks to the rising costs of sprawl and urban disinvestment. A Rutgers study showed sprawl costs taxpayers over 20 times what it provides in financial gain to speculators. Condoning sprawl because of a distorted notion of 'property rights' is just caving in to greed.

"Myth #3: Sprawl's defenders say that growth management limits the prerogatives of local officials and diminishes local control. Reformers need to ask, what local control? Local governments are increasingly buffeted by forces they can't control: federal and state budget cuts, unfunded mandates, national or global economic shifts, etc. Land use reformers want to bolster local government's fiscal independence by achieving land use patterns that minimize municipal costs and boost the tax base.

"Myth #4: Greedy developers are the problem. Wrong. Developers just play the hand they are dealt. Actually, they are the solution. Regulation can direct development to certain areas and protect open lands. But regulation by itself can't remedy the physical defects in existing land use patterns.

BearWatch of Santa Fe Report Bears Beware!

by Janet Cohen

Bears Beware!! This year, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish will be making policy which will effect the survival of Black Bear in New Mexico for years to come. Their conservation policy to date has been deplorable. Couple this with the fast rate of disappearance of bear habitat and wildlife buffer zones due to human habitat expansion, and we've got a serious problem for the survival of our state mammal.

The Unbearable Facts:

- In 1995, Game and Fish sold 6,311 licenses to bear hunters to hunt an official number of 3,000 bears. 40% of the hunters were from out-of-state.
- In 1994, 625 bears were killed.

Only new development can. Land use reform can support free markets, property values, local control and development.

"Myth #5: Politicians have no backbone. Why should politicians have more backbone than anyone else? Why should they champion a cause few people care about, few newspapers write about and prevailing myths argue should not be touched? It is up to private citizens to create a very public parade for land use—and to make it big and visible enough that elected officials will want to march at the head of it."

Richmond's bottom line: go over it, then on with it. This article addresses some basic growth management tools and how they can work to bring about certain objectives. Land use regulations have been around since the early part of the 20th century. Comprehensive planning and zoning tools developed back then for New York still predominate today. However, in a time when Levittown, New York's style of housing prevails, planning and zoning regulations too often fail to address more fundamental questions, such as whether enough public facilities exist to absorb growth, and if so, where that capacity exists within an urban area. Growth management tools address these concerns as well as keeping abreast of infrastructure needs as development occurs, properly balancing development and environmental protection, and promoting economic development. Growth management also recognizes the critical role of affordable housing and transportation planning.

Growth management helps address problems associated with short-term growth spurts. They go beyond responding to market trends to try to shape the desired community of tomorrow without asking the poor to shoulder the burden. And growth management can create jobs, save taxpayers dollars and enhance the local balance sheets.

Higher densities as a growth management strategy in new residential development is a key element of a positive infill strategy. Key to this strategy is making access by proximity rather than access by transportation a central focus. For local officials, concentrating

In 1995, 525 bears were killed. That's an average of nearly 20% of the bear population killed in one season. Compare it with 5% to 7% ratios in Utah, Arizona, and Colorado.

- There is no ceiling on the number of bear licenses issued or bears killed each year in New Mexico. New Mexico's five year harvest total of bears killed was 2,857!!

- What does it cost to kill a bear? \$30 for hunters from New Mexico, \$150 for out-of-staters.

- A spring hunting season on bears is being considered. Spring hunts seriously endanger the survival of cubs, and all bears become easy prey as they are recovering from the depletion of

development means less low-density development, fewer infrastructure costs, more housing options and designs and the potential for more open space. For builders, boosting density means boosting profits; it also boosts the type of housing most in demand by low- and moderate-income residents. Avoiding high-density's loss of privacy and individuality requires smart land planning and design. It also means avoiding resistance to higher densities by those with a NIMBY attitude. Means of achieving higher densities include: a fair share of multifamily, attached or small-lot housing set aside in comprehensive plans and subsequent land use regulations such as zoning; transfer of development rights programs or density bonuses to permit higher densities in exchange for keeping land in outlying areas open or agricultural; reduced lot sizes incorporated in comprehensive plans or zoning; and performance zoning awarding points for higher density and affordable housing.

American Planning Association President Eric Kelly identifies 4 types of growth management:

1. Adequate public facilities requirement directly controls impacts of development on public facilities and ensures capacity there to serve new developments as they occur. While it can reduce sprawl, if public infrastructure is already built in non-contiguous areas or where developers are willing to pay for the costs of extending facilities to high growth areas, the mandate will not work.

2. Growth phasing program directly controls the timing of growth in certain locations based on availability of public facilities. While phasing is usually more effective to reduce sprawl than a facilities requirement, it can lead to a situation where developments are approved before all public facilities are in place.

3. Urban growth boundary clearly delineates limits of urban growth, between developed and undeveloped lands. But if too tightly drawn, it can induce leapfrog development.

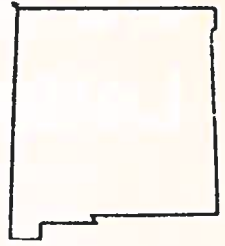
4. Rate of growth program directly regulates community growth rate without regard to capacity.

winter hibernation. This is both inhumane and ecologically unsound.

- Bears can be hunted with dogs in New Mexico. This practice has been outlawed in Colorado. The suffering and unfair disadvantage placed upon the bear should shame this unsportsman-like practice out of existence.

- Game and Fish may not complete their own Black Bear study, which was supposed to give them up-to-date baseline data needed to make informed decisions on the future of the Black Bear. Insist they follow through!!

Please write to Gerald Maracchini, the Director of the Game and Fish Commission, at P.O. Box 25112, Santa Fe, NM 87504, and express your



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by Ken Hughes

This is the third in a series in the *Sierran* on a subject with important consequences to many environmental issues: growth in New Mexico. Its impacts are myriad, yet, to date, options exercised to deal with it constructively have been few. Growth and . . . population, consumption, sprawl, infrastructure, urban planning, automobile use, zoning, even species habitat; these are some of the issues to be addressed in future articles.

Everything is hitched to everything else...



Make a commitment to the next generation by remembering the Sierra Club in your will. Your support will help others to preserve the intricate balance of nature. For more information and confidential assistance, contact the Sierra Club Planned Giving Program, 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105, (415) 977-5538.

concerns. Attend Game and Fish's open public forums on Black Bear/Big Game policy beginning this spring, statewide. More information will be included in the next *Sierran*.



We Get Letters

(con't from page 2)

biologists and documentary filmmakers, for instance? Or just people who behave badly? Perhaps more education, rather than expanded prohibitions are an answer.

Besides, the issue I raised concerns federally designated wilderness areas, NOT national wildlife refuges, which, by definition, are sanctuaries and thus properly off-limits to most human activity. Congress legislated wilderness areas as sacred space to be shared by humans and wildlife alike. To retroactively banish humans from them distorts their original intention and, I think, sends out all sorts of wrong signals.

As for "misanthropy," well, let me quote someone much wiser than I, essayist and poet Wendell Berry: "We have tried on a large scale the experiment of preferring ourselves to the exclusion of all other creatures, with results that are manifestly disastrous. And now, conscious of those results, we are tempted to correct them by denigrating ourselves, by wishing somehow to efface ourselves. But that is only the opposite kind of self-indulgence, utterly worthless as an answer to any problem." (*Another Turn of the Crank*, 1995)

Uneasier

Dear Editor:

In his article "The Uneasy Chair" in the Jan/Feb edition of the *Rio Grande Sierran*, Courtney White says the following; Sierra Club policies are "misanthropic." "Our movement... should be equally weighted between ecological concerns and human needs..." "Today the pendulum has swung too far toward science. Ecology, particularly in the form of endangered species, seems to be driving most of the movement's policies... a deliberate demonization of humans in general has occurred." "... it was the environmental movement's determination to drive a wedge between people and wildlife that fueled the recent Congressional assault on our conservation heritage."

Poppycock!

The purpose of the Sierra Club has always been to protect the wild places of the earth (and the living things within them). This purpose has been expanded in modern times to include protection of the ecological integrity of the earth, including its air and water resources, and the wise, conservative use of other natural resources. Since human long-

term survival depends upon this integrity, policies to implement these purposes cannot be considered "misanthropic" (marked by a hatred or contempt for mankind).

I agree with Courtney (and many others) that last year's Sierra Club ballot question regarding a National Forest logging ban was terribly unfortunate. The Board of Directors was bound by this vote at the time, but policies can be changed. However, in no way do I agree that this, or any other Club stand for preservation of natural resources, implies "misanthropy."

Human's needs are well represented and defended by humans. Our role in the Sierra Club is to provide the counter-argument on behalf of ecosystems, wildlife, and natural areas in the great debate over how much "development" the earth can sustain while still providing a habitable as well as an enjoyable environment for humans. We are the voice for wildlife which has no voice, and we are the protectors of the land which is being rapidly plundered for short-term gain.

The earth's human population has grown beyond the earth's carrying capacity. I believe it is quite appropriate to consider setting aside natural areas where there is no human intrusion. Where, why, and how to do this is likely to be a continuing debate for some time to come, but such actions would not diminish the opportunities for people to find parks, wild places, and wildernesses for recreation, solitude, and personal renewal. I think it is preposterous to suggest that such policies are in some way "driving a wedge between people and wildlife."

I further believe that the public ("middle America" to use Courtney's words) can and will understand and support our goals, if they are appropriately explained. Our opponents will always attempt to misrepresent our actions. In response we must be more articulate and persuasive in explaining our intent and purpose.

The Sierra Club uses the instruments available to accomplish our objectives. If ethical or economic arguments don't work (as they often do not), we use legal means. Unfortunately, all too often the only legal handle we have to stop an ill-advised development project is the Endangered Species Act. I use the word "unfortunately" advisedly, because it is hard to explain to the public why some obscure plant, animal, insect, or fish should prevent some massive development project from proceeding. The constant danger is the threat of repeal or drastic alteration of the Endangered Species Act. The fact that we managed to prevent that Act from being amended in the last session of Congress, I believe, says something about the fundamental understanding by the public of the need for such protection. However, our victories are never permanent. We must be eternally vigilant.

I learned a long time ago from Del Weniger, a savvy ecologist in the Sierra Club in San Antonio, that it never does a bit of good to compromise our principles up front. To attempt to "balance human needs" within a policy simply dilutes the intent of the policy and leads to a much inferior outcome in the end. Policies must be well-researched, defensible, and make ecological sense to the extent possible. The compromising and balancing evolves through the political process as the implementation of policy is debated.

Sincerely,
Phyllenore Howard
14 Reno Place
Santa Fe, NM 87505

No Logging Campaign

Dear Editor:

I appreciate the views expressed by Bernard Foy in the latest issue of the *Rio Grande Sierran*, but would like to address some of the issues he raised regarding the Club's campaign to end commercial logging on national forests.

Mr. Foy suggests that the Club's vote was the result of primarily urban members expressing their views, implying an urban/rural schism. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, 94% of Club chapters voted in favor of the No Commercial Logging Initiative, including the New Mexico Chapter. Most of the rural Western chapters favored it. In the few that didn't, the Initiative lost by only 5 or 6 votes. It was nearly unanimous.

Referring to the national forests in Northern New Mexico, Mr. Foy criticizes the Club for what he feels is our "assumption that forest ecology cannot withstand even the small-scale cutting of, for example, material for vigas in Santa Fe's booming construction market." First of all, I do not think it appropriate for environmental advocates to promote the "booming construction market." Urban sprawl is a serious problem coast to coast. Second, I think Mr. Foy has placed the burden of proof on the wrong shoulders. National forests are owned by every citizen in this nation. It's our land. The timber industry is a guest that has badly overstayed its welcome. It is not incumbent on environmental advocates to prove why we need to protect our land. The burden is on industry to justify continued cutting.

Let's look at the facts. I recently researched the most recent available annual figures for the national forest timber programs in northern New Mexico. The Carson National Forest spent \$2.2 million on logging and returned \$0.00 to the General Fund of the U.S. Treasury. The Cibola National Forest spent \$780,000 on logging and returned nothing. And the Santa Fe National Forest spent \$1.7 million on logging and returned \$0.00 to taxpayers. This logging is going on in areas where the Mexican spotted owl and Goshawk are threatened with extinction because of logging. A close friend of mine just returned from northern New Mexico where he personally observed truckloads of logs cut from old-growth trees coming out of the Carson National Forest. He was horrified. When we have lost so much, and species are heading for extinction, how can we justify the risk of further logging, especially when the timber program is a severe money-loser?

Nationally, about \$1 billion was spent on the national forest logging program in fiscal year 1996. Yet, less than \$50 million, if anything, will be returned to the General Fund of the U.S. Treasury. To put this subsidy in perspective, if we ended all timber sales on our national forests, and redirected this billion-dollar net loss into timber community assistance, we could provide over \$25,000 for each public lands timber worker for job retraining or ecological restoration work. Over \$100 million would still be left over to reduce the deficit in the first year alone! As new jobs were found, several hundred million dollars would be saved annually.

Nor do we need to log national forests for our timber supply. The amount of timber cut each year on all federal lands nationwide now comprises only 4.7% of total annual U.S. timber consumption.

Finally, Mr. Foy asserts that the Club's position is "wildly unrealistic in today's political climate." Yet, on September 23, 1996, 27 members of Congress signed a letter sent to House Speaker Newt Gingrich stating that it is

"unwise to continue the logging of national forests." Remember, the political climate was less than ideal when the Wilderness Act was first introduced too. But that didn't stop the Sierra Club. We changed political realities. It took us several years, but we won. And we'll do it again.

Sincerely,

Chad Hanson,
Chair of the Club's National No Commercial Logging (on public lands) Task Force

Petroglyph Nat'l Monument

Dear Sierra Club:

Here is a copy of the letter I sent to the following: Secretary Babbitt, Senator Jeff Bingaman, and Senator Pete Domenici. I hope it helps. I pray this whole Petroglyph atrocity never happens.

RE: PETROGLYPH NATIONAL MONUMENT

Dear Secretary Babbitt:

Have you ever been to a place where you held your breath, bent your knee, felt the sacredness of the atmosphere around you?

Have you ever stood outside at night, watched the stars turn in their courses, seen the moon rise over a special rock or landmark?

Have you ever been in a cathedral, a church, a synagogue, a temple and felt the presence of God—however you choose the Creator?

Have you answered "yes" to any of these questions? Do the answers stir in you a special, or sacred memory? I ask you to think about what you, and others in our government, are considering doing to the sacred land of the Indians/Native Americas. This land is called the Petroglyph National Monument.

Destroying this land, by access road, park system, or allowing uncontrolled access to the Petroglyphs is the same as destroying a church, temple, a sacred place. The only difference is that this land is sacred and belongs to the Native Peoples of this country.

As Americans, the Bill of Rights empowers us to worship where we choose. It may be a building called a church or synagogue or temple. Why is this "right" not extended to the Native Americans in our midst? Why, when they chose to have the land as their church or temple, are they refused the right to keep their sacred place?

By what authority or right are they denied their place? The Government says so? Balderdash! The city says so? Horse Hockey!

If your place of worship was told it was to be open to mini-bikes, dune buggies, motorcycles and tourist traffic, without so much as a by-your-leave, would you have it? I don't think so. What then gives you the right to demand that Native Americans give up their place of worship, of sacredness?

I ask you to let this protest letter stand for 10,000 other letters from people who will not write, but who feel just as strongly as I do, that the Petroglyph National Monument should not be defiled with traffic going through it, or building out in or around it. The land is sacred and should be allowed to remain so.

Yours truly,
Nancy Thorndike Whitney
410 Morningside Dr. SE
Albuquerque NM 87108



[In November 8, 1996 testimony on behalf of the Sierra Club before the Integrated Water & Resource Planning Committee of the New Mexico State Legislature, John Nielsen of the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies argued that industry restructuring may offer the best opportunity to promote environmental and other public interest objectives in New Mexico. Here are excerpts from Nielsen's testimony.]

Today, the single most important factor affecting the electric power industry in New Mexico, is restructuring and, in particular, the possibility of retail electricity competition. Like other industry stakeholders, the environmental community is responding to the changes underway in the industry. Because of New Mexico's relatively high electricity costs, the drive to introduce retail competition here has perhaps been greater than in other states in the region.

I. Need for Restructuring

New Mexico's utilities have developed very little of the state's substantial renewable energy and energy efficiency resources. Currently, nearly 90% of the electricity generated in New Mexico is from coal-burning power plants. Although these plants have been retrofitted with pollution control equipment, they still emit roughly 200 tons of sulfur dioxide, similar amounts of oxides of nitrogen, and roughly 75,000 tons of carbon dioxide per day. These emissions contribute to a wide range of environmental problems, including visibility degradation, human health impacts, acid rain and the risk of global climate change.

Over time, these environmental impacts could potentially get significantly worse because of rapid population and economic growth. New Mexico is the seventh fastest growing state in the nation. Unless the electric industry begins to integrate cleaner power resources such as renewable energy and energy efficiency into the electric resource base to meet growing electricity demands and seeks ways to manage growth-induced increases in emissions from existing fossil-fuel power plants, the industry's environmental impacts will increase.

Failure to adopt a cleaner energy strategy will have impacts beyond the environment. A recent LAW Fund report entitled "How the West Can Win," showed that an energy strategy based on energy efficiency, renewable energy and cleaner burning natural gas technologies would not only cut regional air pollutant emissions by roughly 25% over the next 20 years, but could also cut energy costs by \$2 billion in present value terms and create roughly 12,000 new jobs in the region. [Note: Readers interested in a copy of the report should contact Energy Chair Ken Hughes.]

We believe that industry restructuring may offer the best opportunity to promote environmental and other public interest objectives in New Mexico. However, without adequate safeguards, restructuring itself poses risks for the environment.

II. The Environmental Risks of Restructuring

The environmental risks of restructuring stem from the fact that competitive electricity markets are likely to be driven by short-term cost considerations as electricity suppliers attempt to maintain or increase their market share. These short-term cost pressures threaten the environment in a variety of ways. First, they threaten investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency. New Mexico has an abundant supply of untapped renewable

energy resources that can provide an array of environmental, risk-diversification and economic development benefits to the state. However, although renewable resources have great promise, renewable technologies are capital intensive, requiring near-term expenditures to realize longer-term benefits. As a result, utilities facing short-term competitive cost pressures are unlikely to make investments in renewable resources.

Investments in energy efficiency programs are also at risk in competitive electricity markets. Although energy efficiency programs are in many cases less expensive than alternative supply-side resources and provide important benefits including lower energy bills, reductions in the need for new generation and transmission facilities and reduced air pollutant emissions, they can raise electricity rates in the short-run as the same fixed costs must be recovered from reduced electricity sales.

In addition to discouraging investments in cleaner power technologies, electricity markets driven by short-run cost pressures could also result in the increased and extended use of the region's older dirtier power plants because these plants are often cheaper to operate than newer cleaner plants and can be life extended relatively inexpensively.

III. Measures to Improve the Environment in Competitive Electricity Markets

The adverse environmental impacts of restructuring are not inevitable. If competitive electricity markets are properly structured competition could reduce the industry's environmental impacts. As a result, we believe that competition can and should be introduced only under conditions that will improve the environment. A number of measures can help achieve this goal.

A. Measures to promote increased use of energy efficiency and renewable energy. In theory, retail competition will provide consumers with the option to choose among many electric service providers, including those offering clean energy resources such as renewable energy and energy efficiency. We support customer-driven "green marketing" approaches as important vehicles for increasing investments in these resources, and urge New Mexico policy makers to encourage these types of programs.

However, by themselves customer-driven approaches are insufficient to guarantee the investment levels necessary for renewable resources and energy efficiency to meet a significant portion of the state's growing demand for electric energy. Traditional market failures, such as lack of information, free-rider problems and the fact that the full environmental and risk-diversification benefits of renewables and energy efficiency are not directly incorporated into electricity consumption decisions, will limit investments in these resources.

To overcome these market barriers and ensure that clean power resources survive in competitive electricity markets we urge New Mexico to adopt the following measures:

--A small, non-bypassable electrical distribution surcharge (often referred to as a System Benefits Charge) to fund investments in energy efficiency and emerging renewable energy technologies.

--A Renewable Resources Portfolio Standard (RPS) to promote commercially-ready renewable resources. The RPS would require all power providers meeting retail electric loads in New Mexico to supply a

percentage of their electricity from renewable resources in New Mexico or, perhaps, the Rocky Mountain/Desert Southwest region. RPS obligations would be tradable, allowing individual suppliers to avoid construction of renewable resources by purchasing renewable energy credits from those who do build or acquire renewable generating capacity. Technologies covered by the RPS should include wind, solar, geothermal, biomass and small-scale hydro.

B. Measures to Prevent Air Quality Degradation. If restructuring goes forward, the state should ensure that competition decreases pollution attributable to serving electric loads in New Mexico. Vigorous promotion of clean power technologies such as energy efficiency and renewable resources will help attain this goal, but will not likely be sufficient especially in the short run. Among the measures available to cut power industry emissions are emissions caps with tradable emission permits. This type of emissions trading program may best be implemented at the regional level. Currently the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission is working to develop a regional emission trading program. We urge the state of New Mexico to support this effort.

The state should also ensure that no power supplier serving loads in New Mexico gains a competitive advantage as a result of lower costs attributable to weaker environmental standards. One way New Mexico could prevent this from occurring is to require that after a date certain or a specific power plant vintage, all plants serving loads in New Mexico meet New Source Performance Standards.

C. Power Facility Siting Regulation. Competition and the need for new generation and transmission facilities to serve growing electric loads could increase the number of new power facility proposals in the state. State siting authority for these facilities must be maintained in order to protect the local environment and public health.

IV. Conclusion

If properly structured, competitive electricity markets could improve the environment relative to the existing electric industry structure in New Mexico of vertically integrated monopoly utilities not subject to IRP. We are prepared to work with legislative leaders, the Public Utility Commission and other industry stakeholders to help design restructuring proposals that enhance the environment.

Protecting and Improving the Environment in a Restructured Electric Power Industry

(submitted by Ken Hughes, Energy & Transportation Chair)

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A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

by Van L. Perkins

The New Mexico Legislature is in full swing, and the name of the game among environmentalists is cooperation. Evidence of that was to be found in our first-ever Environmental Lobbying Day held on February 4. Along with the Rio Grande Chapter, the event was sponsored by Audubon Society, Conservation Voters Alliance, League of Women Voters, 1000 Friends of New Mexico, Trust for Public Land, and the Environmental Law Center—which took the initiative in getting the idea rolling. It was also supported strongly by New Mexico PIRG, and by some other organizations that wished to be less visible.

The day began with a press conference at which we outlined our legislative agenda. The press conference was well attended by volunteer activists who turned out to show their support, and resulted in some good press coverage.

Next came what we called "Lobbying 101: Demystifying the Legislative Process." The "course"

was intended to increase understanding of how the legislature works, and how to influence legislators. It also covered all our issues in depth, so the volunteer lobbyist/activists who showed up would be better able to discuss issues which concerned them with the legislators they would meet later. And show up they did. The session was attended by about 50 people, many of whom were still discussing issues two hours later. Talk about dedication and interest.

Others left the discussion earlier to tour the Capitol, and then go on to the real business of the day: actually lobbying of their legislators. Eventually the issue-works followed suit. By the end of the afternoon, everyone had either talked to their legislators or left them messages. All in all, environmental awareness in the Capitol increased exponentially that afternoon.

That evening we held a reception at the Santa Fe Hilton for legislators, their staffs, and our volunteer lobbyist/activists. The

turnout was amazing! The room was filled to overflowing with enthusiastic people, about 200 in all, engaged in serious discussion of environmental issues. Legislators, both Democrat and Republican, got an earful—probably two—about why they should think of the environment when they cast their votes. It was an exciting evening, and certainly gave me a much needed battery recharge.

We intend to make this an annual event, and hope to build on it year by year. I hope even more of you will be able to participate next time around. A very big thank you to those of you who helped make this one a smashing success!

The cooperation continues. We meet at 7:30 every morning to plan the day, and determine our strategy. We also hold a meeting every Tuesday at noon in the Conference Room in the State Land Office to update everyone on what is going on, and to be sure we are in sync. Drop by if you are interested. Everyone is welcome.

Brewing a Stronger ISTE A

[From Sierra Club's national Transportation Subcommittee
Submitted by Ken Hughes, member]

Life before ISTE A (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, 1991) Transit and highways separately funded. . . Declining transit funding. . . Cancerous highway growth, fueled by federal (Highway Trust Fund) and state gas taxes, menacing and destroying our cities, natural areas, water and air quality.

The ISTE A revolution:

1. Declares the Interstate Highway System completed. Recognizes environmental and social impacts of highways. Encourages maintenance and management rather than new construction.

2. Cedes some planning and spending authority from state highway departments to local/regional Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO). Mandates consideration of environmental protection, accessibility to jobs and housing, more transportation choices.

3. Mandates that the public be invited to participate in planning.

4. Allows MPOs and DOTs to switch over half their total funding from highway to transit, or vice versa ("flexibility"). Equalizes federal transit construction support to highway construction support, 80%. However, Congress has been generous with highways and has starved transit in their year-to-year budget allocations.

5. Allows federal funding of local street and road maintenance.

Also needed:

1. Retain MPO authority and flexibility to use highway funds for transit and pedestrians.

2. Prohibit federal funding of road construction which would increase single occupant vehicles (SOV). Offer bonus funds to regions or states which reduce their per capita vehicle miles traveled.

3. Adjust gas taxes, smog and

parking fees to eliminate any subsidies to motor vehicle use, including environmental and health impacts. Mandate a study of present motor vehicle subsidies.

4. Prohibit construction of roads or off-road vehicle trails in parks, roadless areas and on other federal and state lands except to decrease auto impacts and vehicle miles traveled therein.

5. Any "set-asides" must be consistent with the above principles, and should reduce vehicle miles traveled in auto-impacted and natural areas. Qualifying projects include public transit to increase access to parks, and pedestrian, bicycle, bus and rail improvements to shift trips away from driving and flying.

6. Fully fund transit, enhancement, air quality, safety and pedestrian programs in annual budget appropriations. (You'll have to stay on their backs every year about this one.)

What you can do:

1. Subscribe to our e-mail transportation alerts by sending a request to john.holtzclaw@sierraclub.org

2. Write (Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510; House Office Building, Washington DC 20515), phone (202-224-3121), fax or e-mail Congress about ISTE A.

3. Meet with your congressperson about ISTE A.

4. Attend your congressperson's public meetings and ask questions about ISTE A.

5. Get involved in your MPO's planning process.

6. Educate public officials and the general public on ISTE A by writing a letter to the editor of your local paper. Highlight a local ISTE A success, if possible.



Roundhouse Report

(con't from page 1)

environmental gains. We invite and welcome your participation, monitoring bills (Web Site <http://www.nm.org/legislature/>), testifying at committee hearings, contacting your legislators. Please let us know when there is an issue that concerns you or if you would like to be part of a phone or e-mail network. You can reach me during the day at 983-4254. You can reach Chapter Chair Van Perkins at 983-8801, e-mail: van.perkins@sierraclub.org. The remaining weeks of the legislative session will require the efforts of us all.

From the Editor Thanks, Volunteers!

Many of you may not know, but the *Rio Grande Sierran* is almost exclusively a volunteer effort.

Some other chapters rely on employees, articles graciously supplied to newsletter editors from national Club staff in San Francisco, or reprints of articles from other sources. The *Rio Grande Sierran*, on the other hand, is

written mostly by volunteers, who make work to keep the membership informed.

And they do such a good job, we occasionally have to turn down articles for a given issue, because we don't have room!

I know all of you join me is saying, "Thanks," to all of our great volunteer writers.

LANDOWNER

by Gloria Dyc

The border of the land is still wilderness
I follow deer tracks
and marvel over the compact
between the yucca and cactus
cedar wood dry as bone
the architecture of stairs
made from flat stones
The silence is in my ears
like the wings of insects
now I can hear the surf of my
blood

The inner section of the land
has been cleared: all new growth
But in the border section
the earth exudes moisture
and I am as thirsty for it
as the pinon tree
I want to know as the Anasazi did
how to get to the nearest spring
how many nights I could keep
warm

with this dried wood
I traveled to the Tetons years ago
with a Lakota companion
Weary, we scouted for a public
space
where we could camp and rest
Public lands were being sold off
We followed the fence lines
prohibiting us from meadows
and forests
warning signs:

NO TRESPASSING

See what this country has become
my friend railed as we left
the remote Tetons behind us
and searched for a cheap hotel
I imagined vacation homes for
the elite
with cathedral ceilings and huge
logs
stripped from the old forests
of the Northwest:

PRIVATE PROPERTY
KEEP OUT

A mountainside becomes a site
for a ski lodge
a cave: a tomb for waste
a plain: a pool of capital
cattle, wood, oranges
a territory: a source of rancor
that borders marked with blood
What is this paper deed
easements and mineral rights
assigned to others
xerox copies in offices
a military to protect what is now
under this government "mine"??
I don't know how to become an
owner

this is a uniform that doesn't fit
Below in the distance I see lights
the silent passage of the Santa Fe
at the base of the darkening mesa
The coyotes can hear the train
feel the vibrations on the earth
they begin to yelp in response
With all the dried wood here
I could build a fire: now I feel safe

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